Controversy and division in post-restoration Quakerism : the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian controversies and comparisons with the internal divisions of other seventeenth-century non-conformist groups

Thesis

UNRESTRICTED

CONTROVERSY AND DIVISION IN POST-RESTORATION QUAKERISM:
The Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies and Comparisons with the Internal Divisions of Other Seventeenth-Century Nonconformist Groups

Clare J.L. Martin
MA Hons. (Oxon.)

Ph.D. Thesis

2003

History Department
The Open University

CONTROVERSY AND DIVISION IN POST-RESTORATION QUAKERISM: THE HAT, WILKINSON-STORY AND KEITHIAN CONTROVERSIES AND COMPARISONS WITH THE INTERNAL DIVISIONS OF OTHER SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NONCONFORMIST GROUPS

ABSTRACT

The period following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 was a challenging time for nonconformists. Severe persecution and the gradual diminution of millennial hopes forced them to look to their long-term survival as coherent religious groups. This accelerated the development of group consciousness and institutionalisation within the nonconformist churches. However, the decision-making process inherent in this development resulted in internal divisions concerning interpretation of the group's authoritative guide, whether it was Scripture or the Spirit.

Within the Society of Friends, leading Friends' concern for the future survival of Quakerism was embodied in efforts to curb the excesses of early Quaker enthusiasm and individualism. They sought to exert the authority of the church over the conscience of the individual. This provoked resistance from those who viewed this as an abandonment of the Quaker belief in the inner light. This thesis examines the most serious post-Restoration manifestations of Friends' struggle concerning human and spiritual authority: the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies. The Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies saw dissident Friends

defending the freedom of the inner light against the imposed authority of George Fox and other leading Friends. However, the Keithian Controversy saw leading Friends defending the inner light against further restrictions that George Keith sought to impose upon it.

This thesis also compares Quaker internal controversies with those of other seventeenth-century nonconformist groups: General Baptists, Particular Baptists, Muggletonians, Independents and English Presbyterians. All churches that had developed a sense of group awareness experienced internal divisions during this period. However, the different structures of organisation and authority of the various groups determined both their susceptibility to division and their ability to overcome it. These structures also influenced the abilities of the different churches to survive the challenges of persecution and toleration.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my thanks to everyone who has helped me during my research and the writing of my thesis. I am particularly grateful to my supervisor, Anne Laurence, for her invaluable advice, encouragement and patience. I am also thankful to all those members of The Open University staff who have helped me in any way and to The Open University Arts Faculty Research Committee for grants towards the travel costs incurred during my research.

For their assistance, often above and beyond the call of duty, I am extremely grateful to the librarians, archivists and staff of the following institutions: Friends House Library, the Bodleian Library, particularly Duke Humfrey's reading room, Dr. Williams's Library, the British Library, The Open University Library, the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, the Institute of Historical Research, Berkshire Record Office, Buckinghamshire Record Office, Cambridgeshire Record Office (Cambridge), Cumbria Record Office (Kendal), Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, Norfolk Record Office and Wiltshire Record Office.

I am very thankful for the encouragement and advice that I have received from 'Ben' Pink Dandelion and other members of the Quaker studies Research Association and for the support of my friends and family. I am grateful to various medical professionals for enabling me to complete my research but most particularly to

my GP, Jonathan Fairfield. Above all, my thanks go to my husband, Simon, without whose financial support I should have lacked the resources to complete my research and without whose love and emotional support I should have been incapable of doing so.

Throughout this thesis, with the exception of pamphlet titles and authors' names, spelling and dating have been modernised.

ABBREVIATIONS

Accuser	The Accuser of Our Brethren, London, 1681.
ARO	Aylesbury Record Office, Buckinghamshire.
Berkshire QM Minutes	Berkshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, transcript, Berkshire Record Office.
BJR	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
Bolam et al., English Presbyterians	Bolam, C.G., Goring, Jeremy, Short, H.L. and Thomas, Roger, The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism, London, 1968.
Braithwaite, Beginnings	Braithwaite, William C., The Beginnings of Quakerism, 2nd edn., 1955, reprint, York, 1981.
Braithwaite, Second Period	Braithwaite, William C., The Second Period of Quakerism, 2nd edn., 1961, reprint, York, 1979.
Bristol Two Weeks Minutes	Mortimer, Russell, ed., Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1667-1686, Bristol Record Society, 26 (1971).
BQ	The Baptist Quarterly.
BRO	Berkshire Record Office.
Buckinghamshire QM Minutes	Buckinghamshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, 1678-1761, MS, Aylesbury Record Office.
Carroll, John Perrot	Carroll, Kenneth L., John Perrot: Early Quaker Schismatic, London, 1971.
Chippenham MM Minutes	'The Minute Book of Chippenham Monthly Meeting, 1669-1709', transcribed by Nina Saxon Snell, Friends House Library.
Collier, Narrative	Collier, Thomas, A Brief and True Narrative of the Unrighteous Dealings, n.p., n.d.
CRO	Cambridgeshire Record Office, Cambridge.
Damrosch, The Sorrows	Damrosch, Leo, The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1996.

Davies, Quakers	Davies, Adrian, The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725, Oxford, 2000.
FHL	Friends House Library, London.
Frost, Keithian Controversy	Frost, J. William, The Keithian Controversy in Early Pennsylvania, Norwood, PA, 1980.
General Assembly Minutes	Minutes of the General Baptist General Assembly.
General Association Minutes	Minutes of the General Baptist General Association.
Greaves and Zaller, Biographical Dictionary	Greaves, Richard L. and Zaller, Robert, eds., Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century, Brighton, 1982-1984.
HALS	Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.
Hertford Minutes	Hertford Monthly and Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, MS, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.
Hill et al., Muggletonians	Hill, Christopher, Reay, Barry and Lamont, William, The World of the Muggletonians, London, 1983.
Hogshaw-House Men's MM Minutes	Hogshaw-House and Biddlesdon Men's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1678-1734/5, MS, Aylesbury Record Office.
Hogshaw-House Women's MM Minutes	Hogshaw-House and Biddlesdon Women's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1678-1762, MS, Aylesbury Record Office.
Huntingdon MM Minutes	Huntingdon Monthly Meeting Minute Book, MS, Cambridgeshire Record Office.
Huntingdonshire QM Minutes	Huntingdonshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, MS, Cambridgeshire Record Office.
Ingle, First Among Friends	Ingle, H. Larry, First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism, New York and Oxford, 1994.
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History.
JFHS	Journal of the Friends' Historical Society.
JRH	Journal of Religious History.
JURCHS	Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society.

Keith, Exact Narrative	Keith, George, An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall, London, 1696.
Kendal Condemnations	Kendal Book of Condemnations, MS, Kendal Record Office.
Kendal Minutes	Kendal Monthly and Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, MS, Kendal Record Office.
Kendal Women's Minutes	Kendal Women's Monthly and Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, MS, Kendal Record Office.
KRO	Kendal Record Office, Cumbria.
Land, 'Doctrinal Controversies'	Land, Richard D., 'Doctrinal Controversies of English Particular Baptists (1644-1691), as Illustrated by the Career and Writings of Thomas Collier', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1979.
Leachman, 'From an Unruly Sect'	Leachman, Caroline, 'From an "Unruly Sect" to a Society of "Strict Unity": The Development of Quakerism in England, c.1650-1689', Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1997.
Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions	Lumpkin, William L., Baptist Confessions of Faith, Chicago, 1959.
MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists'	MacDonald, Murdina D., 'London Calvinistic Baptists, 1689-1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1982.
Moore, The Light	Moore, Rosemary, The Light in their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain, 1646-1666, University Park, PA, 2000.
Morning Meeting Minutes	Morning Meeting Book, MS, Friends House Library.
Muggleton, Acts	Muggleton, Lodowick, The Acts of the Witnesses, London, 1699.
Nickalls, Fox's Journal	Nickalls, John L., ed., Journal of George Fox, 1952, reprint, London, 1986.
Nuttall, Holy Spirit	Nuttall, Geoffrey F., The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, Oxford, 1946.

PMHB	The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.
Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes	Minutes of the Philadelphia Meeting of Ministers, transcribed in Frost, Keithian Controversy, pp.137-149.
Philadelphia MM Minutes	Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1690-1699, transcribed in Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 4 (1909), pp.141-263.
Reading MM Minutes (mainstream)	Reading Men's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, transcript, Berkshire Record Office.
Reading MM Minutes (Wilkinson-Story)	'The Minute Book of Reading Monthly Meeting (Curtis Party) 1668-1716', transcribed by Nina Saxon Snell, Berkshire Record Office.
Rogers, Christian-Quaker	Rogers, William, The Christian-Quaker Distinguished from the Apostate and Innovator in Five Parts, London, 1680.
TBHS	Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society.
Underhill, Records	Underhill, Edward Bean, ed., Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys and Hexham, 1644-1720, Hanserd Knollys Society, London, 1854.
Underwood, 'The Controversy'	Underwood, Ted LeRoy, 'The Controversy Between the Baptists and the Quakers in England, 1650-1689: A Theological Elucidation', Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1965.
Upperside Men's MM Minutes	Snell, Beatrice Saxon, ed., The Minute Book of the Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends for the Upperside of Buckinghamshire, 1669-1690, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 1 (1937).
Upperside Women's MM Minutes	Upperside Women's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1677-1737, MS, Aylesbury Record Office.
Watts, Dissenters	Watts, Michael, The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution, 1978, reprint, Oxford, 1999.

Whitley, Minutes	Whitley, W.T., ed., Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England with Kindred Records, (2 Vols.), Baptist Historical Society, London, 1909-1910, Vol.1.
Wiltshire QM Minutes	Wiltshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, MS, Wiltshire Record Office.
WRO	Wiltshire Record Office.
YM Minutes	London Yearly Meeting Minutes, MS, Friends House Library.

INTRODUCTION

The period after 1660 was a time of changes and challenges for the Society of Friends and, indeed, for other nonconformist groups. Nonconformists' hopes of toleration or comprehension were dashed by the resurgence of religious conservatism, as the Anglican nobility and gentry returned to political power following the Restoration, and by Parliament's refusal to endorse Charles II's 1660 Declaration of Breda. Furthermore, the 1661 Fifth Monarchist rising confirmed the restored government's fears of nonconformist plotting and prompted the wave of parliamentary legislation which initiated the harsh persecution of nonconformists: the Clarendon Code. These developments forced Dissenting groups to develop a greater sense of identity, to look towards their future survival and to develop the organisational institutions that would enable them to survive.

Within the Society of Friends, this process of institutionalisation necessitated the assertion of corporate authority over the individual conscience, a development resented by many Friends. The period was therefore marked by serious internal disagreement, as Friends sought to balance their desire to survive as a coherent and united religious group with their belief in the power of the inner light to inspire the individual. This thesis will examine the most serious post-Restoration manifestations of Friends' struggle concerning human and spiritual authority: the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies.

Other nonconformist groups also experienced internal divisions during this period and Friends' internal controversies will be compared with those of other seventeenth-century nonconformist groups.

The development of the Society of Friends during the post-Restoration period and thereafter has often been debated in terms of development from sect to denomination, according to sociologists' definition of the terms. Bryan Wilson defines a sect as a voluntary association, of which membership is by proof of personal merit. The emphasis is on exclusiveness. Those who contravene the doctrinal, moral or organisational precepts of the group are expelled. The group's self-conception is as an elect, gathered remnant and members aspire to personal perfection. There is a high level of lay participation and hostility or indifference to secular society. The personal commitment of members is very high and the sect has a totalitarian hold over them. By contrast, Wilson defines a denomination as a group which accepts adherents without the imposition of strict prerequisites of entry, such as a testimony of faith, and which has a purely formalised admission procedure. The emphasis is on breadth and tolerance and the apathetic and wayward are rarely expelled. The group's self-conception is unclear and its doctrinal position is not stressed. It is content to be one movement among a number that are considered acceptable in God's sight. It has a trained, professional ministry and only limited lay participation. The

group accepts the values of secular society and individual commitment is not very intense.[1]

This thesis will examine post-Restoration Quaker internal controversy in the context of the growth of group consciousness and institutionalisation. However, this will not be done in terms of the transformation from sect to denomination. The terms, 'sect' and 'denomination' can be unhelpful and misleading in an examination of the development of the Society of Friends during the post-Restoration period. Michael Mullett has noted the limitations of sociologists' theory of progression from sect to denomination. Sociologists do not entirely agree upon a clear definition of the terms, 'sect' and 'denomination'. Even considering the most widely agreed upon characteristics of the two terms, Friends of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cannot be confined to either category because they exhibit some properties of sects and some of denominations. As Mullett argues, '"denominational" and "sectarian" traits struggled for ascendancy throughout the history of the Society of Friends'.[2]

Friends' attitude towards society is a good example of this. At the beginning of the post-Restoration period, when the Hat Controversy took place, this attitude was distinctly sectarian.

---

[1] Bryan R. Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', in Bryan R. Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements, London, 1967, pp.22-45.
[2] Michael Mullett, 'From Sect to Denomination? Social Developments in Eighteenth-Century Quakerism', JRH, 13 (1984), pp.168-191.

Friends eschewed the world and its manners, fashions and pastimes, seeking to cut themselves off from worldly corruption. They reinforced this separation through the adoption of distinctive habits and forms of language.[3] However, during the 1670s, the period which saw the outbreak of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, Friends moved a little closer towards an attitude to society more characteristic of a denomination. They still maintained their distinctive behaviour and refused to allow marriage outside the group. However, they were more open to involvement with other members of society, particularly in trade and in contributing to poor relief in their local parishes. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the time of the Keithian Controversy, Friends' attitude changed again. Realising that some Friends were being drawn towards the fashions and distractions of the world, they retreated once more into a sectarian separation from society. Trade with others continued but Friends signalled their rejection of society's values by adopting uniformity of dress.

This example shows that, whilst they are useful for the purposes of definition, the terms, 'sect' and 'denomination' do not contribute to an understanding of the process of the development of the Society of Friends. This development was not a smooth progression from one state to another. Moreover, the rigid use of these definitions can make it appear that, during the post-

---

[3] Friends' refusal to participate in hat honour and their use of the 'thee' and 'thou' terms of address were the clearest examples of Friends' rejection of the values of English society.

Restoration period, the Society of Friends did not develop at all. Because Friends have not fulfilled the criteria of sociologists' definitions of a denomination, they have tended to be regarded, instead, as having remained a sect for most of their history. Indeed, Elizabeth Isichei argues that Friends remained profoundly sectarian until the mid-nineteenth century.[4] Thus, the use of this terminology can obscure the fact that, during the latter part of the seventeenth century, there were institutional developments within the Society of Friends; that Friends did develop systems of organisation and discipline and did become a well-ordered church. Nor were Friends alone among Dissenters in becoming institutionalised during this period. To widely varying degrees, General Baptists, Particular Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians and Muggletonians had all begun to develop institutions of organisation and authority by the end of the seventeenth century.

Wilson has argued rightly that schism is a feature of sects, churches and denominations that are still in the early period of denominational development, and that such schisms are often caused by organisational differences or by the question of purity of doctrine.[5] He classifies sects according to the nature of their theories of salvation; their answer to the question, 'What shall we do to be saved?' Wilson's system of classification is designed to encompass all Christian sects in all social settings and

---

[4] Elizabeth Isichei, 'From Sect to Denomination among English Quakers', in Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism, pp.161-181.
[5] Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', in Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism, pp.22-45.

historical periods and therefore includes seven different categories of sect: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist and utopian.[6] However, in the more limited context of post-Restoration England, this thesis suggests a more specific classification as an aid to the examination and comparison of the various nonconformist groups. There is insufficient difference between the salvation theories of the Dissenting groups of this period to render these theories a useful basis of classification. Instead, post-Restoration Dissenting groups are categorised according to their structure of authority and organisation.

The main nonconformist groups of the post-Restoration period adopted three different types of organisation: those in which authority resided in a monocratic leader, those which recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation and those which adopted a hierarchical system of organisation and authority. The first category included the Muggletonians. The second included the General Baptists, Particular Baptists, Independents and Presbyterians. Friends adopted the third type of organisation; the hierarchical system. The Society of Friends had a four-tier system of business meetings. The individual meetings, Particular Meetings, were represented at and were answerable to the Monthly Meetings. Monthly Meetings tended to cover a fairly small geographical area such as a few neighbouring towns. They, in their

---

[6] Bryan Wilson, Religious Sects: A Sociological Study, London, 1970, pp.36-40.

turn, were represented at and answerable to the Quarterly Meetings, which encompassed all the meetings in a county. The Quarterly Meetings were represented at and were answerable to the London Yearly Meeting. All Quaker meetings throughout the world were accountable to this body of ultimate authority within the Quaker church. Through the system of meetings, its advice was communicated to and its decisions enjoined upon Friends at all levels. There is also a fourth category of post-Restoration nonconformist group; the unstructured gathering. Groups with little sense of group consciousness or organisational structure, such as Seekers, Ranters and Fifth Monarchists belong to this model. These groups tended to lack cohesion. Rather than being rent by internal schism, individuals joined and left the various groups as the Spirit moved them. This thesis does not consider these unstructured gatherings in any detail because, unlike within churches organised according to the other models, unstructured gatherings did not experience internal controversy as a symptom of the development of group consciousness and institutionalisation. Therefore, there is less scope for useful comparison between unstructured gatherings and Friends than there is between Friends and groups of the other models of authority and organisation.

As they had started to develop a sense of group consciousness, some nonconformist groups, including Friends, had begun to develop the basics of organisation and discipline during the Interregnum. However, following the Restoration, persecution and disappointment of hopes of toleration or comprehension

undoubtedly accelerated both the growth of group consciousness and the institutionalisation of nonconformist groups. Although it was not itself a cause of internal controversy, one of the factors which contributed to the institutionalisation of Dissenting groups was the gradual diminution of eschatological expectation during the post-Restoration period. Prior to the Restoration, eschatological expectation was high among English people of all levels of society, both within the Church of England and without.[7] However, following the Restoration and the re-establishment of episcopacy, the belief that the end of the world was imminent began to diminish.[8] The realisation that the world was probably not going to end as soon as they had anticipated, led nonconformist leaders to look to the long-term survival of their churches. This accelerated the development of internal organisational structure.

Within the Society of Friends, it appears that the post-Restoration realisation that there would be no immediate physical Second Coming of Christ led such Friends as George Whitehead and William Penn instead to claim a spiritual, internal Second Coming.[9] This was in stark contrast to the literal eschatological expectation of the rest of society. In fact, Bryan Ball argues

---

[7] Barry Howson, 'Eschatology in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England', Evangelical Quarterly, 70 (1998), pp.325-350.
[8] Christopher Hill is among those historians who have identified a diminution of eschatological prophecy following the Restoration: Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution, London, 1972, p.355.
[9] Stephen Trowell, 'George Keith: Post-Restoration Quaker Theology and the Experience of Defeat', BJR, 76 (1994), pp.119-137.

that Friends had adopted an internal interpretation prior to the Restoration; that they believed that Christ's Kingdom:

> was not established once at the end of time but continuously as individuals yielded to the influence of the Spirit.[10]

It is true that there was belief in an internal Second Coming among Friends. However, Ball overstates the prevalence of this opinion. Friends' belief in the inner light did not exclude the possibility of a physical Second Coming or a physical end of the world. Because Friends believed in the freedom of the light to inspire the individual, they would not allow Friends' consciences to be forced over such issues. Whilst some Friends, at least in the post-Restoration period, did believe in an internal Second Coming, there were others who believed that the Second Coming would be physical. It will be seen below, particularly in Chapter Three, that when they issued statements of their faith, Friends worded them ambiguously in order to allow for either a physical or spiritual interpretation of soteriological and eschatological matters.

Although Ball claims that there is a wealth of evidence to prove his assertion that Friends had adopted an internal eschatological interpretation before the Restoration, it remains unclear whether or not this was the case. The examples he cites are ambiguous. For instance, the evidence which he considers most

---

[10] Bryan W. Ball, A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 12, Leiden, 1975, pp.203-204.

compelling is Francis Howgill's description of his conversion to the Quaker belief in the inner light. Ball sees Howgill's use of the language of Revelation as evidence that Howgill believed that the Second Coming had taken place within him.[11] However, examination of the passage Ball refers to, indicates that Howgill is simply using the apocalyptic language of Revelation as a metaphor to describe the momentous occasion of his conversion.[12] Explicit Quaker statements of belief in a spiritual Second Coming seem to have been made only after the Restoration. For example, in 1668, George Whitehead wrote:

> But three comings of Christ (not only that in the flesh at Jerusalem, and that in the Spirit, but also another coming in the flesh, yet to be expected) we do not read of…[13]

Whether there was significant belief in a spiritual Second Coming among Friends prior to the Restoration is unclear. However, during the post-Restoration period, an increasing tendency to internalise the Second Coming and a diminution of expectation of an immediate end to the world, contributed to leading Friends' concern to develop an organisational structure which would hold the Society of Friends together for the long term.

Whilst the diminution or internalisation of eschatological expectation was a catalyst, the most significant impetus to

---

[11] Ball, A Great Expectation, p.206.
[12] Francis Howgill, The Inheritance of Jacob Discovered, London, 1656, pp.11-13.
[13] G[eorge] Whitehead, The Light and Life of Christ Within, London, 1668, p.41.

institutionalisation was undoubtedly the post-Restoration persecution of Dissenters. Although suffering was seen as a mark of the true church and therefore not something to be avoided, nonconformist leaders nonetheless needed to be pragmatic in the face of the increased persecution following the Restoration. Intense persecution could result in the loss of recruits to the nonconformist groups and the imprisonment of leading members could cause practical difficulties. The Dissenting groups needed to develop systems of organisation and communication in order to hold themselves together as coherent groups during the years of harshest persecution. Friends had suffered persecution even before the Restoration and had already become adept at communicating with and encouraging each other during times of difficulty. However, it was during the harsh persecution of the early post-Restoration period that leading Friends became more concerned to exert the authority of the church over its adherents, as a means of sustaining the Society.

The arrest and trial of James Nayler after his 1656 Bristol re-enactment of Christ's entry into Jerusalem had shown leading Friends the danger posed to the group if the activities of enthusiastic individuals went unchecked. The excesses of fanatical individuals were so damaging to the public image of Friends that they could bring increased persecution upon the whole group. Therefore, the system of internal organisation developed during the 1660s and 1670s was designed not only to provide support and encouragement in the face of persecution, but also to limit that

persecution by bringing enthusiastic individuals under the control of the group. However, to do this was to compromise the essential Quaker belief in the power of the inner light to inspire the individual, a move which provoked much resentment and controversy within the Society.

The first chapter of this thesis will examine the Hat Controversy of the 1660s. The emergence of this controversy was directly related to the developments in Quakerism resulting from increased persecution and the diminution of eschatological expectation. John Perrot, the man at the centre of the Hat Controversy, represented the spirituality and enthusiasm of early Quakerism. He was very much in the mould of James Nayler and, following his return from imprisonment in Rome, even attracted many of Nayler's erstwhile supporters. When Perrot had set out on his missionary journey to convert the pope in 1657, leading Friends had been supportive of such enthusiastic ventures. However, by 1661, when he returned from the incarceration that had resulted from his missionary efforts, Quakerism was changing.

Perrot's return came at the height of the increased persecution following the Restoration. Not only were Friends suffering distraint of their goods for refusing to pay tithes or church rates. Often whole meetings would be arrested at once and imprisoned, frequently for several months and in appalling conditions, for meeting to worship and for refusing to swear the Oath of Allegiance. As a result of this increased persecution as

well as the Nayler debacle and the new concern for the long-term survival of Quakerism, leading Friends were seeking to curb the excesses of early Quaker enthusiasm by exerting the authority of the group over the individual Friend. Perrot's return to England in the midst of these changes quickly ignited controversy as those Friends who were unhappy with these developments soon gathered around Perrot. Thus, the lines were drawn between those Friends who yearned for the freedom and individualism of early Quakerism and those who believed that exerting the authority of the church over the individual was necessary for the future survival of the Society. Perrot and his supporters focussed their attacks upon male Friends' practice of removing their hats for prayer because this was the most visible sign of the increasing formalism of post-Restoration Quakerism. However, their protests had the unintentional effect of confirming leading Friends' fear of enthusiastic individuals. Thus, the Hat Controversy directly resulted in George Fox's establishment of a hierarchical system of church government, as a surer means of controlling Friends' religious behaviour.

This system provoked even more serious resistance from those who regarded this as a further imposition of human authority over the inner light. The most serious demonstration of resistance was the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, which began in the early 1670s and continued into the early eighteenth century. This controversy is investigated in Chapter Two. The Wilkinson-Story Controversy took place against a background of changing fortunes for Friends

and other nonconformists. On the whole, the period during which this controversy took place was one of reduced persecution of Friends. Although Friends did not seek licences for their ministers or meeting-houses under the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence, they do appear to have benefited from the lull in persecution at this time. It was a time of growing confidence among Dissenters, as illustrated by their participation in politics and in Friends' efforts to appeal to the government for better treatment. However, sufferings for refusal to pay tithes continued throughout the period of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy and into the eighteenth century. There were also periods of more intense suffering during this lengthy controversy. The Exclusion Crisis of the early 1680s saw mass imprisonments and violent attacks upon Friends and other nonconformists.

Although the Wilkinson-Story Controversy did not begin until the 1670s, it is likely that it was the result of resentment that had been building up for a few years; perhaps since the Hat Controversy had been brought to an end around 1666. This controversy was a further challenge to the post-Restoration developments within Quakerism which had seen the freedom of the individual conscience subordinated to the authority of the church. There were undoubtedly a number of factors which eventually caused resentment to boil over into open schism. As with the Hat Controversy, these factors were related to leading Friends' concern for the survival of Quakerism. The system of business meetings, designed as a means of both communication and control,

was particularly resented. However, division was actually triggered in many parts of the country by Fox's insistence that women's business meetings be given responsibility in the matter of Friends' marriages, perhaps as a means of preserving the Quaker identity by preventing marriage outside the church. It will be seen that the principal objection of the leading dissidents was to Fox and other London Friends exerting their personal authority, whereas rank and file Wilkinson-Story supporters in the localities objected primarily to the authority of the newly-established women's business meetings.

The third chapter examines the controversy surrounding George Keith. During the 1690s, Keith sought to assert the authority of Scripture over that of the inner light and to impose creedal affirmation as a requisite of Quaker membership. Although it soon spread to England, the controversy began in Philadelphia, where Keith was living at this time and it may be that the beginning of controversy was related to this geographical location. As a leading Friend, Keith may well have felt some responsibility for the spiritual welfare of Friends in America, distant as they were from the control of the central bodies of Quaker authority in London. This was of particular concern to him because, unlike in England, political and economic power in Pennsylvania rested in the hands of Friends. Therefore, people of other religious persuasions attended Quaker worship in the hope of gaining favour with powerful Friends. Keith was no doubt concerned that the influence of these people would compromise Quaker values. These

factors led him to examine the religious position of the Friends around him and to try to introduce creedal affirmation and proof of religious soundness as a means of ensuring purity of Quaker membership. However, leading Friends would not agree to the imposition of such limitations upon the freedom of the inner light to illuminate the individual and controversy ensued as Keith's own doctrinal position changed and he made increasingly serious accusations of doctrinal errors against Friends.

The Keithian Controversy differed from the two earlier controversies both in its nature and the external pressures against which it took place. Whereas the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies saw dissidents defending the inner light against the imposed authority of leading Friends, the Keithian Controversy saw leading Friends defending the inner light against the further restrictions that Keith sought to impose upon it. Unlike the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies, the Keithian Controversy took place after the Toleration Act. Toleration does not appear to have contributed to the outbreak of controversy. However, it did affect leading Friends' response to Keith's attacks. Because Friends' sufferings had been considerably reduced by the Toleration Act, they were now less concerned with reducing current persecution, than with preventing Keith's criticisms from re-initiating harsher persecution of Friends. His accusations that Friends denied the physical Christ, if taken seriously, could have seen Friends excluded from the toleration. Friends therefore issued explanations of their faith, as a means of demonstrating their

doctrinal soundness both to the authorities and to society at large. Indeed, such was their concern for the public image of Quakerism, that Keith was condemned for his public reflections upon Friends, rather than for his theology. However, concern for toleration was not sufficiently great to prompt Friends to compromise their religious values. They did not seek to impose uniformity of belief upon Friends through the imposition of a creed.

Using the model outlined above, the final chapter of the thesis will compare Quaker controversy with the internal controversies of some other post-Restoration nonconformist groups. These groups faced the same external pressures and challenges as Friends: the persecution of the early decades of the post-Restoration period and the toleration of the last decade of the seventeenth century. It will be seen that the growth of group consciousness and the process of institutionalisation also occasioned internal disagreement within the other nonconformist churches of this period. Those groups which looked to the Bible as their authoritative guide were no less prone to internal controversy than Friends, who looked to the inner light as their authoritative guide. In both cases, controversy frequently ensued from the difficulty of interpreting the teaching of the chosen authoritative guide; a problem faced by all nonconformists upon rejecting the dictates of the Established Church.

Wilson is correct in his observation that schism is a feature of sects and of denominations in the early stages of denominational development, and that such divisions are frequently caused by organisational differences and the desire for purity of doctrine. However, it will be argued that a group's tendency to serious internal disagreement was further determined by its structure of church organisation and authority and that this structure also affected each group's ability to deal with internal controversy and to survive as a coherent group without spiritual or numerical decline or the loss of group identity. These comparisons will show that, contrary to what might be expected of a group which championed the freedom of the inner light, Friends developed a more authoritarian organisational system than other nonconformist churches.

This thesis is based predominantly upon three types of source: the controversial pamphlets published during the course of the various controversies, minute books and personal papers. Because the network of Quaker business meetings had not been established at the time of the Hat Controversy, the study of this controversy is based upon the pamphlet literature and the personal papers of the protagonists. By contrast, little of George Keith's personal correspondence survives. Therefore, the examination of the Keithian Controversy is based upon the substantial pamphlet literature as well as minute-book material, including that of Philadelphia meetings and the central bodies of Quaker organisation: the London Yearly Meeting, Second Day's Morning

Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. The study of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy uses the pamphlet literature, personal papers and the considerable minute-book material: that of the London central bodies and of Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, particularly of Kendal, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire and Hertfordshire. This material includes minute books of Kendal and Buckinghamshire women's meetings and the Reading Wilkinson-Story Monthly Meeting. The examination of the internal controversies of other nonconformist groups uses the pamphlet literature and some minute books.

Chronologically, this thesis is limited to the period between the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the end of the seventeenth century. Because both the Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies continued into the early eighteenth century, the year 1700 is not used as a cut-off date. However, early eighteenth-century controversies, such as the Affirmation Controversy, fall outside the chronological bounds of this thesis. This study focuses upon those post-Restoration Quaker controversies which most seriously affected the Society of Friends as a whole. Therefore, there is no in-depth examination of disaffected individuals, such as Francis Bugg, or of divisions confined to small geographical areas, such as the York separation of the 1680s. Because this is primarily an investigation of Quaker controversy, the internal controversies of other nonconformist groups are not examined in as great detail as the Quaker ones.

Individually, the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies have received a reasonable amount of attention from Quaker historians. Kenneth Carroll and Ethyn Williams Kirby have provided detailed accounts of the Hat and Keithian Controversies in their biographies of John Perrot and George Keith.[14] William Braithwaite has also described all three controversies in The Second Period of Quakerism.[15] These detailed accounts are extremely valuable but there are certain limitations to the Quaker confessional history of Braithwaite and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Quaker writers. Most notable, perhaps, is the tendency of confessional historians to look at the history of their own denomination in isolation from other groups and even from society as a whole. This has been equally true of the confessional historians of other denominations, such as the Baptist historian, Adam Taylor.

Confessional historians have also demonstrated less concern to write dispassionately than other historians have. Braithwaite's writing contains numerous examples of this. For instance, in describing Thomas Curtis's involvement in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, Braithwaite remarks:

> We may wish that Curtis had seen his way to subordinate his judgement to that of the main body but I do not think we need

---

[14] Carroll, John Perrot, Chapters 6-9; Ethyn Williams Kirby, George Keith (1638-1716), New York and London, 1942, Chapters 4-9.
[15] Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.228-244, Chapter 11 and pp.469-496.

> lose our respect for a man whose service to Quakerism had been great, and whose sincerity is unquestioned.[16]

He is arguing from his personal, Quaker perspective and revealing his personal distaste for division. Likewise, although there is no partiality apparent in Carroll's more recent account of the Hat Controversy, it is nonetheless difficult to ignore his statement that his personal sympathy came to lie with Fox rather than with Perrot.[17] Again, Quaker confessional historians have not been alone among the historians of nonconformity in expressing their personal values in their historical writing. For example, the writing of eighteenth-century Baptist historian, Thomas Crosby, demonstrates both the introspection of confessional history and the reluctance of confessional historians to write dispassionately. As son-in-law to Benjamin Keach, Crosby's account of the Particular Baptist Hymn Singing Controversy is unsurprisingly biased.[18]

Modern-day Quaker academics write more impartial accounts of early Quaker history and no longer demonstrate the traditional unquestioning reverence for George Fox. The religious affiliation of historians of Quakerism who are themselves Friends is no longer readily discernible from their historical writing. During the past forty years, Quaker historians have become far more adept at setting Friends in their historical context. Successful examples

---

[16] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.473.
[17] Carroll, John Perrot, p.vii.
[18] Thomas Crosby, The History of the English Baptists from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I, Vol.4, London, 1740, pp.298-301.

have been provided both by Friends, such as Hugh Barbour and Rosemary Moore, and by historians who are not Friends themselves, such as Barry Reay and Adrian Davies. However, whilst there has been much examination of early Friends as members of seventeenth-century society, Quaker historians have made few attempts to compare the experiences of seventeenth-century Friends with those of other nonconformists.

In relation to seventeenth-century Quaker controversy, this thesis seeks to address those areas that have received least attention from historians. Most Quaker histories have had either a local or a national focus, rather than seeking to combine both elements in the quest for the wider picture. This is as true of the work that has been done on Quaker controversy as it is of general Quaker histories. Local studies have tended to neglect the abundance of printed pamphlets exchanged during these controversies, even though Friends in the localities would certainly have read many of them.[19] National studies have tended to make very little use of local minute book material and have largely ignored the impact of controversy in the localities.[20]

---

[19] Howard Smith, in his study of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy in Reading, lists only the pamphlets exchanged by the Reading disputants. His account is based upon the Reading minute books, without reference to non-local sources: Howard R. Smith, 'The Wilkinson-Story Controversy in Reading', JFHS, 1 (1903-1904), pp.57-61.

[20] Braithwaite does mention the Wilkinson-Story Controversy in the localities and refers to the Westmorland minutes in relation to the origins of the division. He also cites the Reading minutes but only because he is following Smith's account: Braithwaite, Second Period, Chapter 11 and pp.470-473. In his account of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, Larry Ingle makes very few references either to local minute books or to printed pamphlets: Ingle, First Among Friends, pp.261-264.

Unfortunately, there is insufficient surviving evidence to determine the impact of the Hat Controversy in the localities. However, wherever possible, this thesis will consider both the local and wider aspects of the Quaker controversies.

The Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies have generally been treated as isolated incidents. These controversies have not been ignored in recent studies. For example, Moore gives a very good account of the Hat Controversy in her study of early Quakerism and Larry Ingle mentions both the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies in his biography of Fox.[21] However, there has been no attempt to investigate post-Restoration Quaker controversy as a whole. This thesis seeks to do that; to examine Quaker internal controversy as an essential part of the development of Quakerism during the post-Restoration period.

Seventeenth-century historians have paid relatively little attention to nonconformist internal controversy as an entity. As with Quaker controversies, the internal divisions of other nonconformist groups have been described individually, often as part of a general denominational history or a biography of a prominent nonconformist figure. For instance, in his general history of Baptists, A.C. Underwood mentions Baptist internal disagreements concerning, respectively, oaths, mixed communion,

---

[21] Moore, The Light, Chapter 15; Ingle, First Among Friends, pp.197-206; 261-264.

Matthew Caffyn's Socinianism and hymn singing.[22] Richard Land describes the controversy surrounding Particular Baptist, Thomas Collier, in his doctoral thesis, which is a biography of Collier.[23] However, there has been little attempt to examine nonconformist internal division as something of importance in and of itself. This thesis will set Quaker internal controversy in its historical context by comparing it with the internal disagreements of other nonconformist groups. It will also investigate nonconformist internal controversy as an entity, arguing that it was a consequence of the development of group consciousness and institutionalisation, common to many Dissenting groups.

---

[22] A.C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, London, 1947, pp.90-92, 103-104, 127, 132-133.
[23] Land 'Doctrinal Controversies', Chapter 6.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HAT CONTROVERSY

Introduction

The first controversy to divide Friends in the post-Restoration era was that which arose around John Perrot, and his opposition to male Friends' practice of removing their hats during prayer. Perrot was an Irishman and Baptist who was converted to Quakerism by Edward Burrough in 1655.[1] It has been suggested that Perrot may have been illegitimately descended from Sir John Perrot, Lord Deputy of Ireland, although there is no evidence to support this theory.[2]

The Hat Controversy began around 1661 when Perrot returned from imprisonment in Rome. He accepted voluntary exile to Barbados in Autumn 1662 and died in 1665. In the short time between Perrot's return from Rome and his death, the controversy had reached much of Southern England and Wales, Holland and many areas in America. In England the controversy was relatively short-lived. It was essentially over by the end of 1666, when a meeting was held in London to restore unity.[3] In Holland, division fizzled out around 1669 following the repentance of

---

[1] For a detailed biography of John Perrot, see Carroll, John Perrot.
[2] Kenneth Carroll has pointed out that Perrot is unlikely to have been a son of Sir John Perrot as the latter was in England from 1588 until his death in the Tower of London in 1592. Carroll has also noted that the names Perrot and Parrott were found in several parts of Ireland and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: Carroll, John Perrot, p.1.
[3] The exact date of this meeting is unclear but it was either late 1666 or early 1667 as it took place fairly soon after Fox's release from Scarborough Castle in September 1666.

Benjamin Furly, Perrot's main supporter there. However, in parts of America, the division rumbled on into the 1670s at least.

Leo Damrosch claims that 'Perrot's challenge was really a last-ditch plea for the freedom of the free spirit' and views the controversy merely as an aftershock of the Nayler debacle.[4] Whilst the liberty of the inner light certainly was of central importance to the Hat Controversy, this statement belittles the significance both of this controversy and of the later divisions which saw the fight for the freedom of the Spirit continue until the end of the seventeenth century and beyond. It is also true that there were connections between the Nayler affair and the Hat Controversy, which are discussed below. However, it is wrong to view the Hat Controversy as little more than a postscript to the Nayler affair. The Nayler debacle and Perrot's challenge were two distinct episodes and part of the significance of the Hat Controversy lies in the very fact that it did occur post-Nayler as well as post-Restoration. Developments in Quakerism arising from the Nayler affair and from the Restoration of Charles II influenced the way in which Friends reacted to Perrot's challenge.

Larry Ingle rightly highlights the importance of the issue of the authority of George Fox to the Hat Controversy. However, his explanation that this controversy differs from the earlier challenges to Fox's authority by Rice Jones and James Nayler is overstated:

---

[4] Damrosch, The Sorrows, pp.243-244.

> The struggles before had been Jones versus Fox and Nayler versus Fox, but now it was Perrot versus Fox and the machinery he had created to exercise control and oversight of the Society of Friends.[5]

It is true that Fox was the leading figure among Friends at the time of the Hat Controversy but it would be wrong to suggest that either his pre-eminence or his machinery of oversight and control were fully developed at this time. Fox was first among a group of leading Friends during the early 1660s and much of the system of church government was not put into place until the latter part of the decade. By this time, Perrot was dead and most of his supporters reconciled to the main body of Friends.

Resistance to the increasing personal authority of George Fox was a factor in this controversy, as will be discussed below. However, it is important to note that Perrot and the majority of his supporters did not object so much to the authority of Fox himself as to the concept of *any* person or persons having authority to judge the spirit of another. It will be seen that the Hat Controversy resulted from the disparity between the Quaker belief in the power of the Spirit to inspire the individual and the development of Friends' corporate identity. It was a struggle between those Friends who wished to cling onto the spirituality and enthusiasm of early Quakerism

---

[5] Ingle, First Among Friends, p.198. Rice or Rhys Jones was a former Baptist who came into conflict with Fox in 1651 or earlier. Jones led a group known as the 'Proud Quakers' who met in Nottingham Castle during the 1650s. They appear to have remained independent of other Friends and they permitted greater laxity of conduct. Jones denied the humanity of Christ and swore oaths, whilst his followers indulged in pastimes condemned by other Friends, such as football and wrestling: Moore, The Light, p.7; Nickalls, Fox's Journal, pp.63, 178, 337.

and those who looked towards the long-term survival of Quakerism and sought a more orderly and united religious society.

It is not necessary to give a detailed, chronological description here of the Hat Controversy as this has been done elsewhere by William Braithwaite, Kenneth Carroll, Ingle and Rosemary Moore.[6] Instead, the intention is to consider the significance of the Hat Controversy within the context of the post-Restoration development of the Society of Friends.

Background to the Hat Controversy

It will be seen that, following the Restoration of Charles II in May 1660, the priorities of leading Friends changed. As eschatological expectation began to diminish and persecution escalated, Fox and others began to look more seriously towards the future survival of Quakerism. Because much of Friends' suffering was due to public fear and abhorrence of Quakerism, leading Friends increasingly sought to alter the public perception of Friends. These Friends endeavoured to ensure the future survival of Quakerism by portraying Friends as peaceable, respectable members of society. In order to promote this image, leading Friends found it necessary to limit the excesses of Friends' enthusiastic early days by subjecting the inspirations of the individual to the corporate authority of the religious group. Unsurprisingly, this development met with serious

---

[6] Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.228-244; Carroll, John Perrot, pp.46ff.; Ingle, First Among Friends, pp.197-206; Moore, The Light, Chapter 15.

resistance from those Friends who viewed this as an abandonment of Friends' original principles and spirituality.

Public Perception of Quakerism at the Restoration

During the earliest years of Quakerism, Friends and many others had believed that the end of the world was imminent. Friends rejected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination which predominated in interregnum England and believed that only those who embraced the Truth would be assured of salvation. Although they believed that the inner light could reveal all that was necessary to salvation, Friends' chief concern was to spread their message to as many people as possible. They felt no need for long-term planning and they were little concerned about what the world thought of them.

Friends were committed to following the immediate leadings of Christ within them and to remaining faithful to this 'Truth'. The public's view of this and even the danger of imprisonment were irrelevant to them. However, with the Restoration of Charles II, hopes of an immediate eschatological event gradually started to diminish.[7] Missionary work remained very important to Friends but now they also needed to consider how to ensure that they would survive as a religious group. Concern for Friends' public image was part of this process of institutionalisation

---

[7] Friends certainly did not abandon their eschatological expectation overnight. Michael Mullett has argued that fervent expressions of Quaker messianism are to be found in Friends' writings well into the eighteenth century: Mullett, 'From Sect to Denomination? Social Developments in Eighteenth-Century English Quakerism', JRH, 13 (1984), pp.168-191.

and the controversies of the post-Restoration period show Friends' increasing preoccupation with their public image.

From their earliest days, Friends had provoked a great deal of hostility from both the civil authorities and other members of the public. As both Adrian Davies and Caroline Leachman have recently argued, early Friends aroused suspicion not only through their religious beliefs but also through their behaviour. Their spiritual rebirth and fear of worldly contagion led them to reject accepted religious practices, social conventions and rites of passage, to adopt an aggressive attitude towards the magistracy and ministry, to develop unusual modes of conduct and language and to indulge in ecstatic behaviour.[8] All of this combined to set them at odds with the rest of seventeenth-century society and to excite fears that they were both religious and social revolutionaries.

The enthusiastic excesses of James Nayler and his supporters in 1656 seemed to justify these fears and increased public and governmental hostility towards Friends. Nayler's arrival in Bristol in the manner of Christ's entry into Jerusalem demonstrated a serious flaw in the Quaker belief in the inner light.[9] If taken to its extreme, this belief could lead to antinomianism with individuals attributing all sorts of outrageous behaviour to the leading of the Spirit. That Nayler was tried by Parliament, found guilty of 'horrid blasphemy' and

---

[8] Davies, Quakers, Chapters 1-4; Leachman, 'From an Unruly Sect', Chapter 6.

[9] For a detailed description and analysis of James Nayler's re-enactment of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, his trial, punishment and Friends' reactions, see Damrosch, The Sorrows, Chapters 3-5.

suffered horrendous punishment, only narrowly avoiding execution, demonstrates the extent of both public and governmental fear and abhorrence of Quaker excesses.

There was a lull in Quaker ecstatic behaviour following Nayler's disgrace.[10] However, this was short-lived and, at the time of the Restoration, early Quaker attitudes and behaviour continued, as did the fear that these engendered. The anxiety of the government of the restored monarchy concerning Friends was also heightened by the fact that many early Friends had fought among the parliamentary forces during the civil war. Friends' conscientious objection to swearing oaths precluded them from swearing the Oath of Allegiance to Charles II, thereby increasing suspicion that Friends might take up arms against the newly restored regime. This fear was manifested in the passing of the 'Quaker Act' of 1662 and an escalation of the persecution of Friends following the Restoration.[11]

Barry Reay has argued that the harsh treatment of Friends during the early years of the Restoration was not as severe as it could have been, due to the inefficiency of the state, the lengthy legal process and the sympathy or apathy of law-enforcement officers.[12] Nonetheless, the early post-Restoration period was one of severe persecution of Friends, with thousands

---

[10] There was a temporary halt in the Quaker practice of 'going naked' after the Nayler affair but these episodes resumed in 1658: Kenneth Carroll, 'Early Quakers and "Going Naked as a Sign"', Quaker History, 67 (1978), pp.69-87.

[11] The full title of the 'Quaker Act' was 'An Act for Preventing the Mischiefs and Dangers that may Arise by Certain Persons called Quakers, and others, Refusing to take Lawful Oaths'.

[12] Barry Reay, 'The Authorities and Early Restoration Quakerism', JEH, 34 (1983), pp.69-84.

of them suffering imprisonment. This persecution posed a serious threat to Friends' ability to survive as a religious group. Severe persecution was a deterrent to potential recruits to Quakerism and an encouragement to existing Friends to abandon their sectarian affiliation. Moreover, Friends in many areas were left leaderless when prominent Friends were imprisoned. It became apparent to the Quaker leadership that certain changes would have to be made in order to overcome this threat.

Adoption of Pacifism

The restored government was deeply suspicious of Friends and of radical religious groups in general. Friends sought to allay the government's fears that Friends might take up arms against it, and thereby reduce the persecution of Friends, by adopting a pacifist position.

Leading Friends sought to demonstrate that they were a peaceable people who posed no threat to the restored government. A month after Charles II's Restoration, Margaret Fell presented to the king a declaration of Friends' fidelity and peaceful intentions towards him. She asserted Friends' rejection of strife, wars, treason and plotting and requested both liberty of conscience and civil rights and liberties for Friends.[13] In the wake of the abortive Fifth Monarchist rising of January 1661 and governmental suspicion of Quaker involvement, leading Friends

[13] M[argaret] F[ell], A Declaration…to the Present Governors, London, 1660, pp.4, 7-8. Fell's declaration is subscribed by thirteen male Friends, including Fox, and was presented to Charles II on 22 June 1660.

went further and adopted a pacifistic policy. Before the end of the month, they had published a declaration, asserting:

> All bloody principles and practices we…do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever…And we do certainly know, and so testifieth to the world, that the Spirit of Christ which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the Kingdom of this World.[14]

The declaration did not prevent the imprisonment of around 5000 Friends by March 1661 in the anxious atmosphere occasioned by Venner's insurrection. In response to Charles II's orders, most were released during that month but ringleaders remained incarcerated.[15] Severe persecution and prosecution of Friends continued.

The assertion that Friends' refusal to swear or to kill 'is both our principle and practice, and hath been from the beginning' was not actually true.[16] As late as 1659, there were Friends in local militia and the Army.[17] Despite the January 1661 declaration by leading Friends, there was no immediate wholesale adoption of the peace principle. Such Friends as Edward Burrough and Edward Billing were among those who were unwilling to accept

---

[14] George Fox et al., A Declaration from the Harmles and Innocent People, London, 1660, p.2. The declaration is signed by twelve Friends and was presented to the king on 21 January 1661.
[15] Reay, 'The Authorities and Early Restoration Quakerism', JEH, 34 (1983), pp.69-84.
[16] Fox et al., A Declaration from the Harmles and Innocent People, p.4.
[17] Barry Reay, The Quakers and the English Revolution, London, 1985, pp.88-90.

the new testimony.[18] A few Friends were involved in the northern rebellion of 1663. However, Richard Greaves argues that, in the aftermath of this plot, Quaker leaders succeeded in persuading their followers to adopt the peace principle.[19]

Assertion of Corporate Authority

At the same time that they were attempting to introduce the peace principle to the Quaker movement, leading Friends also sought to improve the public perception of Friends and reduce persecution by limiting the excesses of enthusiastic individuals. The embarrassing activities of Nayler and his supporters in 1656, coupled with the increased persecution following the Restoration, had highlighted the need for such controls, which were accomplished through an increasing tendency to subject the individual's spiritual leadings to the authority of the corporate body of the Quaker church.

One means of exerting corporate authority over the individual was through Friends' increasing tendency to judge the veracity of an individual's claim to spiritual inspiration by ascertaining a meeting's 'sense' of the leading of the inner light. This was also their means of resolving their differences of religious interpretation. Whilst the basis of this approach was a belief that the body of Friends was imbued with spiritual authority, it was viewed by some as the imposition of human

---

[18] Leachman, 'From an Unruly Sect', p.263.
[19] Richard L. Greaves, 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"? Changing Conceptions of Quakers in Early Modern Britain', Albion, 33 (2001), pp.24-50.

authority. The 'sense' of the meeting was the general feeling concerning the Spirit's guidance that predominated among a group of Friends gathered together. This 'sense' was not determined by vote so, technically speaking, it did not necessarily represent the majority view. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that meetings frequently adopted an opinion expressed by the minority unless that minority was particularly vocal or consisted of leading Friends. Leading Friends were those who were increasingly regarded as possessing a greater degree of spiritual authority than other Friends, having distinguished themselves in the promulgation and defence of Quakerism. However, the exertion of their authority over other Friends could also be regarded as the imposition of human authority.

When individual Friends believed that they had received a spiritual revelation, determining the 'sense' of Friends came to be seen as an authoritative means of judging whether an individual had indeed been guided by the inner light or had been acted upon by a 'wrong' spirit. If enthusiastic Friends were prepared to submit to this judgement, this could be an effective means of curtailing ecstatic behaviour. However, for some, the very concept of Friends judging the spirit of other Friends was a betrayal of Friends' principal belief in the power of the inner light to illuminate the individual.

John Perrot represented the spiritualism and enthusiasm of early Quakerism. He had undertaken an arduous missionary journey in the Mediterranean region because he believed that he had been commanded by the inner light to go to the Sultan and to the Pope

to convert them to Quakerism. Three years of imprisonment and torture in the mad-house in Rome had caused him to become increasingly introspective and to rely solely upon the inner light as his only source of comfort for most of that time.[20] Therefore, it is little surprise that Perrot believed in the complete freedom of the inner light to illuminate the individual and that he did not view concern for the public image of Quakerism or the avoidance of suffering as sufficient reasons for Friends to seek to impose limitations upon this freedom.

The Grounds of Controversy

It will be seen that Perrot objected to male Friends' practice of removing their hats during prayer and prophesying because he adhered to the early Quaker belief that Friends should act only as the Spirit moved them. This belief had led Friends to reject set forms in worship. For Perrot and his supporters, spiritual authority was greater than that of Scriptural precedent and concern for the public image of Quakerism was of no importance. By contrast, concern for the public perception of Quakerism was a key factor in leading Friends' rejection of Perrot's position. In their attacks upon Perrot, leading Friends emphasised the authority of the Spirit's guidance of the group.

---

[20] After arriving in Rome in June 1658 and announcing his intention to convert the Pope, Perrot was arrested and spent three years imprisoned mostly in the 'Pazzarella', Rome's equivalent of Bedlam. For an account of Perrot's travels and imprisonment, see Carroll, John Perrot, pp.14-33. For Perrot's own account of his imprisonment, see John [Perrot], A Narative of Some Sufferings of J.P. in...Rome, London, 1661, pp.3-10.

It was during the period that leading Friends were attempting to improve the public image of Quakerism, and thereby reduce Friends' sufferings, that Perrot returned to Britain following his release from incarceration in Rome. He arrived in London by late August 1661. Regarding his reception by other prominent Friends, Perrot probably could not have returned at a worse time. Following the Fifth Monarchist rising of January 1661, public fear of nonconformists was at its height and numerous Friends were being arrested. Indeed, within a week of his return to London, Perrot himself was arrested and was imprisoned for several days.[21] In the face of such a level of persecution, the anxiety of leading Friends regarding the danger posed by any Friend who may be led into ecstatic behaviour was also high. Perrot soon came to be viewed as such a threat.

Even before his return to England, Perrot had aroused the anger and anxiety of some leading Friends by writing against male Friends' practice of removing their hats when prayers were being said in their meetings. Whilst still a prisoner in Rome, Perrot believed that he received an express commandment from the Lord to bear testimony against this practice.[22] He duly sent a paper to Friends in England arguing that the earliest Christians had had no custom of removing their hats during prayer. He queried why hats rather than shoes were removed when there was at least a biblical precedent for the removal of shoes, when God

---

[21] Carroll, John Perrot, p.49.

[22] Paper signed, 'the follower of the lamb wheresoever he goeth, John', FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.5, no.17. The paper is undated but was evidently written after Perrot's return from Rome as he mentions having been in captivity there.

commanded Moses to remove his shoes, but no Scriptural precept for the removal of hats. He also argued against making a distinction between men's and women's heads and declared:

> And if any Friend be moved of the Lord God to pray in the congregation of God fallen down with his face to the ground, without taking off the hat, or the shoes, let him do so in the fear and name of the Lord..[23]

In fact, Perrot was mistaken in his assertion that there was no biblical precept for men removing their hats to pray. In their insistence that male Friends remove their hats during prayer and prophesying and that female Friends keep their heads covered, Friends were adhering to the teachings of 1 Corinthians 11. Perrot had apparently overlooked this passage of Scripture. However, even if he had recalled it, it is unlikely that he would have felt constrained to adhere to this requirement. He lived his life according to the immediate inspiration of the Spirit and sought no other authority for his behaviour. The spiritual command to testify against the removal of hats was of greater authority to Perrot than the Scriptural directive to the contrary.

Fox and other leading Friends also recognised the inner light, rather than Scripture as their primary rule. They also believed that the same Spirit which was in the prophets and in the writers of Scripture, was in themselves.[24] Thus, they

---

[23] Paper signed, 'J.P.', transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.12. This document is undated but is written by God's 'servant a prisoner in Rome'.
[24] Nuttall, Holy Spirit, p.26.

believed that their inspirations were as authoritative as the inspirations of the apostles, prophets and gospel-writers. However, as Jack Dobbs has argued, Fox and others were confident that the Spirit would not reveal to them anything which contradicted the teachings of Scripture.[25] Theoretically, the contradiction between Scripture and Perrot's claimed spiritual command would have been enough to persuade Fox and others that Perrot had not been guided by the inner light.

It is interesting to note, however, that in their attacks upon him, Perrot's opponents tended not to refer to the teachings of 1 Corinthians 11. Perhaps this indicates that, in reality, male Friends had adopted the practice of removing their hats during prayer because this was the custom of the day rather than because they had been moved to do so by spiritual directive or biblical investigation. They had removed their hats during prayer before their conversion to Quakerism and had merely continued the practice thereafter. As Moore has pointed out, Friends had no problem in finding an alternative explanation of other biblical precepts that did not fit in with their ideas of God's wishes.[26] In removing their hats for prayer, male Friends were simply adhering to a custom shared by nearly all churches at that time.

From their early days, Friends had rejected the use of set forms in worship. This included rejection of liturgy and outward ordinances. Perrot recognised Friends' practice of removing

---

[25] Jack P.B. Dobbs, 'Authority and the Early Quakers', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1995, p.96.
[26] Moore, The Light, p.195.

their hats during prayer as such a set form and saw it as evidence of the imposition of the authority of leading Friends over the free-working of the Spirit. Friends' practice of removing their hats was a custom that they had fallen into. If they had adhered strictly to their belief in the guidance of the inner light, each Friend should only have removed his hat if he felt directly moved to do so by the Spirit and not merely because other Friends were doing so. This is exactly what Perrot and his supporters were arguing. They were not saying that the removal of the hat was always wrong but that it was wrong unless one was immediately directed by the Spirit to remove one's hat. As William Salt argued:

> If I find movings from the Spirit of the Lord to put off any garment, or the whole, and see the end thereof, I may do it, otherwise it would be wisdom to let it alone in its place.[27]

In fact, Salt went further than Perrot, claiming that Friends should meet to worship only when moved by the Spirit to do so, rather than at set times.[28]

However, because of Friends' increasing belief in the spiritual authority of the group, Perrot's opponents could argue that if it was Friends' 'sense' that the inner light required something, then this was what the Spirit required of all Friends, even if some had not felt personally moved to do it. Thus, the removal of men's hats during prayer and meeting at appointed times were defended not as human institutions but as

---

[27] William Salt, Some Breathings of Life, n.p., 1663, p.3.
[28] Salt, Some Breathings of Life, p.4.

the institutions of the inner light, demonstrated by the fact that it was Friends' 'sense' that these actions were required. Indeed, this belief enabled Perrot's opponents to argue that those who opposed the removal of the hat were defying the guidance of the inner light. Richard Farnsworth in fact argued that Perrot sought to impose a new form in worship by bringing in 'that innovation or new doctrine of keeping on the hat in prayer'.[29]

Fox's reaction to Perrot's attack upon the practice of removing hats was immediate. When he received sight of Perrot's paper from Rome, he quickly issued a reply.[30] Unfortunately this is no longer extant but it began with the words, 'Great judgement will come upon you', which indicates the probable tone of the letter. Fox and other leading Friends had a number of reasons for defending the practice of removing the hat during prayer. Although Friends generally rejected the use of set forms, they may have felt that the simple gestures of removing the hat during prayer and of taking each other by the hand during worship could have a unifying influence within their meetings. Perrot also objected to this practice of shaking hands.[31] However, this action was probably viewed by the majority of Friends as an act of fellowship, rather than a set form.

---

[29] 'Concerning putting off the hat in prayer written in the beginning of the sixth month 1663', signed, 'Richard Farnsworth', transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol. 4, fos.40-43.

[30] Carroll has identified this paper as item 52D in Henry J. Cadbury, ed., Annual Catalogue of George Fox's Papers Compiled in 1694-1697, Philadelphia, 1939, p.74: Carroll, John Perrot, p.51.

[31] The Works Of George Fox, Vol.7: The Epistles Vol.1, State College, PA, 1990, pp.213-215, Epistle 214. Although Carroll dates this epistle 1661 and Braithwaite 1662, its reference to 'Jo. Perrot, whose end was according to his work' indicates that it might have been written shortly after Perrot's death in 1665.

The removal of men's hats during prayer was simply an action required by contemporary expectations of decency. For men to have kept their hats on during prayer would have appeared irreverent. This would have made some Friends feel uncomfortable in their worship and would have brought further public criticism upon Friends at a time when persecution was already severe. Perrot and his supporters argued that Friends should not be governed by what the world thought about them. In a passage which shows that he also placed the authority of the Spirit above that of Scriptural precedent, Furly queried:

> Are we to regard the world's being offended? Are we to please them? Or to keep up a thing in a custom or tradition, without the leadings of the Spirit of God, because it seems to them to have been a comely order made by the Apostles...[32]

In the current political climate, many Friends would evidently have answered, "Yes".

Fox was also aware of the damage that disunity could do to the public image of Quakerism. He was furious that the controversy had exposed Friends' divisions to the world for how could Friends claim to be truly inspired by the Spirit if they were not united? Expressing a sentiment that was repeated by leading Friends throughout the divisions of the seventeenth century, Fox rebuked Perrot:

---

[32] Paper signed, 'Benjamin Furly', transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.23. The paper is undated but it was evidently written some time before Furly repented of supporting Perrot.

> And ye with your earthly spirit and earthly form, have given occasion to the world to say, that the people of God called Quakers, are divided, some with their hats on, and some with them off, and so they are opposite one to the other.[33]

Perrot's Supporters

Although the size of Perrot's following is unknown, many Friends were attracted by his defence of the freedom of the inner light and by his charismatic personality and preaching. Leading Friends viewed Perrot's challenge as a serious threat because he was supported not only by the former followers of Nayler and others who had fallen out with the main body of Friends, but also by some well respected Friends who shared Perrot's fear that the spirituality and vitality of early Quakerism was being lost.

It has already been seen that the public reaction against Friends which had followed the Nayler fiasco was one of the factors which had led many Friends to be more careful about how they were viewed by the English public. However, there were also certain connections between the Hat Controversy and the Nayler affair which made leading Friends all the more anxious to crush the controversy. Prior to his disgrace, Nayler's esteem among Friends had rivalled that of Fox. He was more charismatic than Fox and was a gifted Quaker preacher and writer. Christopher

---

[33] The Works of George Fox, Vol.7: The Epistles Vol.1, pp.213-215, Epistle 214.

Hill has pointed out that some observers regarded Nayler as the 'head Quaker' and Leachman has queried whether Fox would have emerged as the leader of the Quaker movement if Nayler had not entered Bristol on a donkey and had lived longer.[34] Around 1655, in London, a group of devoted but enthusiastic supporters gathered around Nayler. Fox evidently regarded Nayler as a threat to his leadership. A breach developed between the two men after Martha Simmonds, one of Nayler's most ardent supporters, visited Fox during his imprisonment in Launceston and demanded that he bow down to Nayler. As Moore describes it, when Fox was released and finally met with Nayler 'there was utter misunderstanding and they parted on very bad terms'.[35] Before his death in 1660, Nayler had been reconciled to Fox. However, Fox remained wary of any reminder of Nayler's leadership challenge or fanaticism.

As Fox records in his Journal, the practice of keeping the hat on during prayer had first been used by Nayler and his supporters as an expression of disunity with Fox when he prayed.[36] Although Perrot himself had not been a supporter of Nayler, many of Nayler's erstwhile followers and defenders now gave their support to Perrot. They no doubt viewed him as a new champion of the inner light. These people included John Harwood, Mary Booth and, in Barbados, Robert Rich, the man who had publicly licked the brand on Nayler's forehead.

---

[34] Hill, The World Turned Upside Down, p.231; Leachman, 'From an Unruly Sect', p.202.
[35] Moore, The Light, p.39.
[36] Nickalls, Fox's Journal, p.268.

Like Nayler, Perrot also grew a beard. Carroll has observed that Perrot was particularly popular with female Friends.[37] It may be that women were attracted by Perrot's reassertion of the Quaker belief in the spiritual equality of the sexes, in his argument that men and women should not be expected to behave differently concerning covering their heads during prayer.[38] However, there was a tendency among some female Friends to be impressed by charismatic personalities and this more probably explains their inclination towards Perrot. Again, female support for Perrot was reminiscent of Nayler. These associations with Nayler were too much for Fox and other leading Friends and made them all the more determined to overcome Perrot's challenge.

In addition to Nayler's supporters, Perrot also received the support of John Pennyman and his group of malcontent Friends. Isabel Harker, a supporter of Perrot, gives an account of the meeting between leading Friends and Perrot and some of his associates at Gerard Roberts's house, prior to Perrot's departure from London at the end of 1661. She lists Pennyman as one of those present.[39] Ingle has described Pennyman as 'an inveterate Fox hunter'.[40] It is not surprising therefore that he supported Perrot and indeed anyone else who presented a

---

[37] Carroll, John Perrot, p.50.
[38] By contrast, some of the language used by Fox against those involved in the Hat Controversy seems to indicate a misogynistic tendency. In a letter of 5 May 1664 from Lancaster Prison, for example, Fox accuses them of bringing Friends into 'the woman form, from the comely man's, and so into enmity, prejudice and strife': FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.7, no.122.
[39] Isabel Harker to A.D. [Ann Duncon?], 1 January 1662, transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.100.
[40] Ingle, First Among Friends, p.200.

challenge to Fox. Likewise, Pennyman's support of Perrot will have confirmed Fox and other leading Friends in their opinion that Perrot was not to be tolerated.

It is evident from the speed of his reply to Perrot's first paper concerning the removal of the hat, that Fox was worried by Perrot's challenge from the outset. However, it may be that other leading Friends did not regard him as a threat until he returned to England and they saw the type and level of support that he attracted. It appears that it was only very shortly after his return that Perrot started to amass a reasonably large following as he resumed his preaching and missionary work straight away. It is impossible to estimate how many supporters Perrot gathered, as there is no list of names. The controversy was largely confined to London and East Anglia. However, Perrot appears to have attracted a visible following in these areas, which must have been sufficient to alarm leading Friends.

It is likely that Perrot's defence of the free-working of the inner light was attractive to many Friends and he had doubtless earned himself a reputation as a brave servant of that light as a result of his mission to Rome and great sufferings there. Most of the earliest Friends were still alive at this point and many probably longed for the fervour and spontaneity of the early days, when they had been free to follow the leadings of the Spirit as revealed to each individual. Some perhaps hoped that Perrot would reintroduce a greater spirituality among Friends. There must have been a number of

Friends who were not comfortable with some of the developments that were taking place within Quakerism. In particular, there was probably some uneasiness about the idea that some Friends could judge the workings of the Spirit upon others. Fox and others clearly felt that they had the authority to do this. For example, Fox told Harwood that his accusations proceeded from 'an envious, malicious, lying spirit, and a blood-thirsty spirit' and James Parkes described Salt as 'a bad spirit and creeper in darkness'.[41]

Amongst those who were not comfortable with this power that Fox and others had assumed to themselves was Isaac Penington. Penington was evidently greatly impressed by Perrot because of his sufferings in Rome, his writings from that prison and 'his deep reaching, raising and refreshing the life in many [Friends]' since his return from Rome.[42] Penington wrote a paper warning that the greatest would fall if they assumed too much power to themselves and exalted themselves above the Spirit within them:

> Let it be no wonder in Israel, if the Lord should suffer the greatest to fall…and if man lift up himself because of any former or present appearance of the Lord in him, or by him, the Lord will be sure to lay him low…[43]

---

[41] G[eorge] F[ox], The Spirit of Envy, Lying and Persecution, London, 1663, p.4; James Parkes to John Lawson, Blewbury, Berks., 7 January 1665, FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.4, no.128.

[42] Document signed, 'Isaac Penington', which begins, 'Some things have been very observable and wonderful unto me concerning John Perrot', transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.6. This paper is undated but it was evidently written not long after Perrot emigrated to Barbados in 1662, as it refers to his success there.

[43] Undated paper signed, 'Isaac Penington', which begins, 'To such who are little and low, and broken-hearted in Israel', transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.4.

Although Penington did not specifically state that he was referring to leading Friends, it was absolutely clear that these were the people he was alluding to.

Penington enlarged upon the thoughts expressed in this paper in a printed pamphlet, Many Deep Considerations. In this, he again warned that those who had been eminent in the service of the Lord could fall. He also went further by claiming that the only way lesser ones could avoid falling with them was by:

> Keeping to the measure of the life in the particular, and not valuing others…For man is but a vessel, wherein the life may appear or disappear at pleasure; and the Lord is not engaged to make use of any man in his service, further than he seeth good.[44]

This statement had the potential to be very damaging to leading Friends because it not only called into question the future of these men but also seemed to encourage other Friends to disregard their leaders. Isaac Penington was a well respected Friend, which made the publication of these ideas and his support for Perrot all the more worrying to the Quaker leadership. This also meant that they would have to deal carefully with him. Therefore leading Friends, including Francis Howgill, wrote to him to point out that he was hindering those engaged in the work of the Lord.[45]

---

[44] Isaac Penington, Many Deep Considerations, n.p., n.d., p.8. The date 1664 has been attributed to this pamphlet but it was clearly written in or before 1663 as it is mentioned in a letter from Francis Howgill to Isaac [Penington], London, 20 June 1663, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.3-4.

[45] Francis Howgill to Isaac [Penington], London, 20 June, 1663, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.3-4.

Isaac Penington later repented of having supported Perrot and of having written Many Deep Considerations.[46] Similarly, there were other well respected Friends, such as John Crook, who also initially favoured Perrot and later repented or denied that they had ever really done so.[47] Even the young Thomas Ellwood at first accepted Perrot's arguments against the removal of the hat.[48] Although these Friends later rejected Perrot, the fact that they were initially impressed by him demonstrates that Perrot's original supporters were not all mystics and malcontents.

Personality and Human Authority

It will be argued that the issue of personality played an important role in the Hat Controversy. This issue was intrinsically linked to that of human authority in that Perrot's supporters resented the exertion of the personal authority of Fox and regarded this as the imposition of human authority upon Friends. Whilst Perrot may have desired Friends' respect, it appears that he genuinely sought to defend the authority of the inner light rather than to gain a position of authority himself.

---

[46] 'Isaac Penington's Testimony' reproduced in William Penn, Judas and the Jews, n.p., 1673, pp.68-70.
[47] 'John Crook's Testimony' reproduced in Penn, Judas and the Jews, pp.71-72.
[48] Thomas Ellwood, The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, London, 1714, p.243.

The Personality of John Perrot

As previously mentioned, Fox's pre-eminence was not entirely assured at the time of the Hat Controversy. Although Fox was the most revered Friend, there were a number of others, such as Edward Burrough, Francis Howgill and William Dewsbury, who enjoyed almost as much prominence as Fox. Like Fox, they had distinguished themselves as servants of the Truth, through their preaching, writings and sufferings. By the time of the Hat Controversy, there was widespread acceptance among Friends of the belief that such Friends were stronger in the Truth than others. This had been a natural development because it is a normal, human reaction for those less confident in their faith to look to the visibly more confident for guidance and reassurance. Consequently, these charismatic personalities had acquired authority among Friends.

As the example of Nayler shows, there was the potential for great rivalry amongst the several leading Friends. At the time of the Hat Controversy, there were certainly men amongst them whose popularity could have made them a serious threat to Fox if they had ever wished to challenge him. Instead, they worked with Fox to hold Friends together during this time of persecution. With so many of them in prison at any one time, their co-operation with each other was vital.

Perrot fell outside this group of Friends. Before his journey to Rome, he had been highly regarded among Friends and had helped preach the Quaker message within his native Ireland

and England. However, Perrot had languished for three years in the Pazzarella while other prominent Friends had continued to gain in reputation and authority. By the time he returned, Quakerism had moved on. Perrot now represented a spiritual enthusiasm, which had been largely overshadowed by the more practical and worldly concern to hold the body of Friends together in the face of persecution. Perrot had probably hoped for a hero's welcome upon his return from Rome. He evidently received this from some quarters. However, leading Friends instead immediately upbraided him for the expense he had incurred and the offensive language he had used in some of the writings he had sent back from Rome, as well as for two papers he had written regarding the hat.[49] Leading Friends probably also regarded Perrot's mission to Rome as an embarrassment and it certainly aroused ridicule from the English public.[50]

Thus Perrot found himself out in the cold upon his return to England. Being constantly rebuked by Fox and other leading Friends was something he evidently found hard to bear and he claims that it was because of this that he began to meet apart from them.[51] He clearly also resented the attempts of these

---

[49] Perrot's account of the meetings at which he was reproached by Fox and other leading Friends, appears in a letter he wrote to Fox from Jamaica in 1664. This is reproduced in R[obert] R[ich], Hidden Things Brought to Light, London, 1678, pp.2-17. It is claimed that Fox never received this paper or any of the others reproduced in Hidden Things Brought to Light: [George Fox], Something in Answer to a Book, n.p., 1679, p.3.

[50] In June 1662 an anonymous tract appeared, which purported to be a copy of Perrot's challenge to the Pope and the Pope's response, Perrot Against the Pope, London, 1662. Perrot replied with a broadside in which he identified the Pope's response as a forgery but did not actually deny authorship of the challenge to the Pope, John Perrot, John Perrot's Answer to the Pope's Feigned Nameless Helper, London, 1662.

[51] R[ich], Hidden Things Brought to Light, p.8.

Friends to impose their authority upon his conscience; to judge his spirit. Certainly Perrot was not the kind of personality who was prepared to subordinate himself to others in religious matters merely in the interests of making an artificial show of unity. However, it is unclear whether or not he was actually jealous of the authority of leading Friends.

The tone of his writings indicates that Perrot in fact found it very distressing to be reproached and disdained by Friends. For example, he speaks of:

> these wounds I have had in the House of my Friends, which have been more grievous to me than the others which I had in the House of my Enemies.[52]

It is therefore likely that he took his stand of keeping his hat on during prayer because he really did believe that it was what the Lord required of him rather than as a means of attacking the authority of leading Friends. Perrot appears to have been a reluctant schismatic. He denied being of a 'renting and dividing spirit', as he was accused, and he requested a meeting to explain himself in order to satisfy Friends and 'that unity may be kept among all'.[53] The instigators of the later controversies also denied being of a dividing spirit and sought meetings to justify themselves. However, it is the tone of Perrot's writings that distinguishes him from the chief protagonists of the later controversies. His writings lack the virulence and personal reflections of the later controversialists and of some of his own supporters. Moreover, there is an overwhelming sense of his

---

[52] R[ich], Hidden Things Brought to Light, pp.14-15.
[53] Letter from John [Perrot], Witham, 8 November 1661, transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.98.

own unworthiness, which contrasts markedly with the self-confidence and even arrogance exhibited by other controversialists. Perrot declares, 'I am a worm, and one of the weakest of worms, and creeping things before the Lord'.[54] Whilst he is obviously employing hyperbole, Perrot clearly does not esteem himself highly. His intention was not to cause a division among Friends. That was an unhappy consequence of his determination to defend the freedom of the inner light.

The Authority of George Fox

Central to the Hat Controversy was an objection to the imposition of the authority of any Friend or group of Friends over the freedom of the Spirit to inspire the individual. However, the Hat Controversy also demonstrated early resistance to the increasing personal authority of Fox himself; a development which would be central to the discontent among Friends during the 1670s and 1680s.

Perrot was an emotional and charismatic individual and, if the passion and expression of his preaching style matched that of his writing, it is likely that many Friends were attracted by hearing him speak.[55] However, it is possible that some of Perrot's supporters were using him for their own ends. It has been mentioned above that John Pennyman supported Perrot. It is

---

[54] John Perrot, An Epistle for the Most Pure Amity and Unity, London, n.d., p.4.
[55] For an examination of Perrot's literary style, see Nigel Smith, 'Exporting Enthusiasm: John Perrot and the Quaker Epic', in Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, eds., Literature and the English Civil War, Cambridge, 1990, pp.248-262.

quite probable that he did so only as a means of attacking Fox rather than because he had any particular objection to removing his hat during prayer. Similarly, John Harwood might have had a personal agenda behind his support for Perrot.

Harwood appears to have resented George Fox's authority. His main literary contribution to the Hat Controversy amounted to little more than a collection of somewhat far-fetched accusations against Fox; a bitter personal attack in which he claimed to give:

> a true and real demonstration of the cause why I have denied, and do deny the authority of George Fox, which is the original ground of the difference betwixt us.[56]

If he meant that the authority of Fox was the original ground of the difference between the whole of the Perrot party and Fox, Harwood was mistaken. As previously mentioned, the personal authority of George Fox was not the most important source of contention between Perrot and leading Friends. Certainly, Harwood seems to be trying to convince Friends that Fox's attempts to usurp the power of Christ were the grounds of the controversy:

> …he is out of the power of the healing, restoring Spirit, in the devouring nature, which forceth me (with many others) to deny his authority, and to bear a living

---

[56] John Harwood, To All People that Profess the Eternal Truth, London, 1663, [title page]. This pamphlet was intended only 'to go amongst Friends'.

> testimony for God against his works, practices, usurpation and Lordly Dominion..[57]

However, Fox's reply to Harwood reveals the true reason why Harwood had come to resent those Friends who exercised authority over others. He had committed adultery, for which Friends will certainly have condemned him.[58]

In response to Harwood's, To All People that Profess the Eternal Truth, Friends from his native Yorkshire also published a condemnation of Harwood. They did not specifically mention the adultery but claimed:

> [He] was never to our feeling thoroughly subjected under the power of the Truth; though he quickly got the form.

They also explained that they had both privately and publicly admonished, reproved and judged him 'for things wherein we saw and felt him wrong'.[59] Of course, it was easy for Friends to be wise after the event but it is possible that Harwood had been a source of trouble to Friends from the outset.

The involvement in the controversy of such people as Harwood and Pennyman demonstrates that resistance to Fox's power was developing. However, it does appear to have been mainly people who had already fallen out of favour with other Friends who were voicing their objection to his authority at this point.

Within a decade, this situation had changed. By the early 1670s,

---

[57] Harwood, To All People that Profess the Eternal Truth, p.8. This passage shows that Harwood was just as guilty of judging another Friend's spirit as was Fox himself.
[58] G[eorge] F[ox], The Spirit of Envy, Lying and Persecution, pp.1, 10.
[59] Marmaduke Storr et al., To Friends of Truth in London, n.p., n.d., pp.4-5. This document was issued from Beeford, Holderness on 10 December 1663 and is signed by eleven Friends.

the personality of George Fox had become more central to the internal disputes of the Society of Friends, as will be seen below and particularly in the chapter relating to the Wilkinson-Story Controversy.

Defence and Refutation of Perrot's Position

Whilst the Hat Controversy was initiated by Perrot, he was aided in his challenge by some able associates. It will be seen that Benjamin Furly made the most effective defence of Perrot's position, whilst Richard Farnsworth made the most effectual refutation thereof.

Although Perrot appears to have had some followers who were supporting him largely for their own ends, he did have others who genuinely believed in his cause. Robert Rich remained true to Perrot, as to Nayler, long after Perrot's death. This is demonstrated by his publication in 1678 of some papers relating to the Hat Controversy and to Nayler in Hidden Things Brought to Light. Of more help to Perrot's cause during his lifetime, was Benjamin Furly. Furly was a leading Friend in Rotterdam and it was he who produced the most convincing refutation of leading Friends' position regarding the hat. In an undated paper addressed to 'Friends', he warned of the dangers about becoming too concerned about outward matters:

> Must not that mind be crucified that placeth religion in putting off any of the garments in a custom...and counteth it an irreligious, irreverent thing for a man to wear his

> hat when he calls upon the Lord, more than to wear his coat, or for a man to wear his hat, more than a woman hers?

He argued that men and women were equal in Christ. He also claimed that the world was just as offended by Friends prophesying with their heads covered as by their praying in that manner, citing evidence that Fox had previously defended Friends for prophesying with their heads covered. Most significantly, Furly argued that the insistence upon Friends' use of gestures in worship was no better than set liturgy or priestly garb:

> Is it any more lawful for a man to bind himself at all times, when he is moved by the spirit of the lord to pray in public, to perform it in this or that way, manner, form, gesture or posture, than to do it in this or that form of words? And may he not as well determine to do it always in a surplice, as always without his hat seeing the one doth as much destroy the freedom of the Spirit as the other?[60]

It is little surprise that Fox responded angrily to Furly's papers. He wrote to Furly accusing him of doing the Devil's work.[61]

Furly was also responsible for introducing the Hat Controversy to Dutch Friends. He had met Perrot during a visit to England in 1661 and had carried the controversy back with him to Holland. He did eventually repent of his support for Perrot's

---

[60] Undated paper from Benjamin Furly to Friends, transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fos.22-25.

[61] Undated paper of G.F. to B. Furly, FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.7, no.107. Carroll claims that this paper is dated 1662. However, the original manuscript is undated.

position. He wrote a paper of self-condemnation in 1669 in which he admitted having written several papers concerning the hat. Others followed his example, bringing an end to the controversy in Holland.[62]

Whilst Furly wrote the most effective defence of Perrot's position, it would be reasonable to argue that Richard Farnsworth wrote the most significant defence of the Quaker leadership's position. George Fox himself was not the most gifted writer among leading Friends. At times his style is so confused that he almost seems to be defending the very point of view he is trying to refute. For example, in an epistle to Friends 'concerning not putting off the hat in prayer', Fox writes confusedly about the issue of covering or uncovering men's and women's heads. He then warns Friends against becoming too concerned about outward things, which is precisely what Perrot and his supporters had been warning Fox about.[63]

Farnsworth, on the other hand, was one of a number of Friends with a clearer style of writing. More significantly, as Braithwaite has pointed out, he wrote a convincing defence of Friends' concern for the outward form of removing the hat during prayer. In this he pointed out that, whilst the outward was subordinate to the inward, the two should not be separated. If the human outward man was divided from the divine inward man there would be no action and no worship at all. The inward man would be subject only to spiritual laws, not outward laws, and

---

[62] Carroll, John Perrot, pp.109-111.
[63] The Works of George Fox, Vol.7: The Epistles Vol.1, p.188, Epistle 199. The date 1661 has been attributed to this paper.

the outward man would 'not be liable to any persecutions of suffering for righteousness' sake'.[64]

Salt's Some Breathings of Life, in which he argued that Friends should only meet for worship when immediately moved to do so, may not have reached Farnsworth before he wrote this.[65] However, perhaps Farnsworth anticipated such a suggestion. After all, Perrot's belief that people should act only as directly commanded by the Spirit, if taken to its extreme, would have meant that there would be no justification for pre-arranged Meetings for Worship. Indeed, there would be no need for religious societies at all because everyone would believe only what the Spirit revealed to him or her and only worship when and if commanded by the Spirit to do so. Farnsworth evidently defended the use of the outward form because he saw the potential danger of Perrot's position.

Universalism

Farnsworth was justified in his fear of the possible consequences of the Perrot party's emphasis upon the direct inspiration of the individual to the exclusion of any outward form. Because of their belief in the free-working of the inner light, Perrot and some of his supporters developed

---

[64] Richard Farnsworth, 'Concerning putting off the hat in prayer', August 1663, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.40-43, cited in Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.243-244.

[65] Salt's Some Breathings of Life was published in the same year that Farnsworth wrote his paper. However, the fact that Whitehead informed Fox of the publication of Salt's pamphlet in a letter of 9 November 1663 indicates that it was published later in the year: FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.4, no.95.

universalistic tendencies. Whilst this made them more accepting of other religious groups, it also meant that they need not have felt constrained to remain within Quakerism because they did not recognise it as the only true faith. It would therefore have been very damaging to the Quaker movement if more Friends had been led aside by them.

Robert Rich appears to have been more universalist than Quaker. It is not clear if and when he actually ceased to consider himself a Friend but he does appear to have been associated with a group which he refers to as 'The Church of the First-Born'. They were among the seven churches of different denominations amongst which he distributed £210 following the Fire of London.[66]

Perrot's most notorious expression of universalistic sentiments came in 1662. Having recently been released from an imprisonment during which he had appeared to be in unity with Friends and had removed his hat during prayer, Perrot outraged Friends by publishing An Epistle for the Most Pure Amity and Unity. This was addressed 'To all sincere-hearted-souls, whether Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Seekers, Quakers, or others under any other denomination whatsoever'.[67] In this he claimed to:

---

[66] Robert Rich, Love Without Dissimulation, n.p., n.d., pp.4-5. Friends refused their £30 share of the money. According to Moore, the Church of the First-Born were fringe Quakers who were probably not an organised group: Moore, The Light, p.289.

[67] Perrot, An Epistle for the Most Pure Amity and Unity, [p.1].

> speak as one that seeth the end of all distinctions and separations by names, and such like terms and denominations.

He then further enraged Friends by saying that although he is:

> known by the name of Quaker; yet known be it unto you, that there are of the people called Seekers, Baptists, Independents, and others…[those] whom I as truly own, and with whom I have more unity, than with divers which are called by the name of Quakers, whose name have not changed them from the nature of the enmity which works against the heavenly Spirit of unity, and power of the love of God.[68]

Considering the fact that Friends had suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hands of Presbyterians and Independents during the Interregnum, Friends were outraged and were not appeased by the fact that Perrot then went on to commend Friends in general for their unrivalled piety and example in sufferings. Fox immediately dispatched a letter to be read to Perrot as he sat aboard ship, awaiting exile to Barbados. In this Fox demanded that Perrot issue a paper condemning all that he had said, written or done to the grief of Friends and described him as being of 'a spirit that would give up the children of God to the persecutor'.[69] Although he could not have expected a more favourable reaction, Perrot appears to have been deeply upset by Fox's response. When Mary Booth went aboard to say her

---

[68] Perrot, An Epistle for the Most Pure Amity and Unity, pp.12-13.

[69] This paper is reproduced in R[ich], Hidden Things Brought to Light, pp.17-18. It is interesting to note that in this paper Fox argues that 'if there were a multitude of sins amongst the Quakers, if he [Perrot] had been in love, he would have covered them'. In response to George Keith's criticisms during the 1690s, Friends claimed that they had never been guilty of covering their errors.

"Farewells" to Perrot, she found him 'sorely smitten and wounded with hard dealing'.[70]

The Last years of the Controversy

Perrot spread the controversy to Barbados and many parts of America. The division in those areas lasted considerably longer than it did in Britain, largely because it was more difficult for leading Friends to exert their influence over Friends at such a vast geographical distance. In England, these Friends gradually overcame the challenge of Perrot and his supporters by writing against them and exhorting Friends to unity.

Perrot accepted voluntary exile to Barbados in the Autumn of 1662, little more than a year after his return from Rome. He arrived in Barbados in October 1662. Although he never returned to England, the Hat Controversy did not end with his departure. Indeed, most of the letters and pamphlets exchanged in England were written after he had emigrated.

From Barbados, Perrot continued to make his presence felt in England. The most visible demonstration in defence of the free-working of the Spirit which came over from Barbados actually came in the person of John Brown. Brown had been a close friend of Perrot for many years and he accompanied him to Barbados and on his travels in America. In the Summer of 1664,

---

[70] Undated letter from M[ary] B[ooth] to E[dmund] C[rosse], transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fo.36.

reluctantly obeying a command from the inner light, he came over to London and fasted for several days. He then went to the Bull and Mouth Meeting where he cut off his hair, stripped off his clothes, donned coarse cloth and gave forth a testimony in defence of the Spirit and predicted woes to come. Then he dressed, left the meeting and returned to Barbados.[71]

Perrot did not do anything as dramatic as this. However, he continued to communicate with his supporters by letter, many of which papers survive in transcript form in the Crosse collection.[72] He also produced the occasional printed pamphlet. However, he does not seem to have believed that he was continuing a controversy. As previously mentioned, there is none of the virulence of the pamphlets produced by later Quaker schismatics and Perrot seems to have been hoping that his opponents would leave him in peace:

> ..Now if any man will continue his ancient war after I have signified my life of peace and forgiveness..he will act dishonourably in striking that which he knoweth beforehand will not strike him again...[73]

Of course, Friends did not leave him in peace. As long as he was writing in defence of himself and his position, Friends were bound to answer him. Leading Friends were shown a letter from Perrot in Jamaica to some of his followers in England, defending himself and the neglect of his ministry. The letter

---

[71] Brown's full account of his 'sign' of 20 July 1664 and its meaning is transcribed in FHL, Crosse MSS, fos.54-57.
[72] FHL, Crosse MSS.
[73] John Perrot, To All Simple, Honest-Intending and Innocent People, London, 1664, p.8.

was dated 12 June 1665. Leading Friends responded angrily with Truth Vindicated, which is signed by Farnsworth and eleven others.[74] Presumably copies were distributed in the West Indies as well as in England but Perrot will not have seen them as he was probably dead before his letter which prompted this response even reached England.

Perrot had also caused disruption on the other side of the Atlantic, where he continued his work of spreading the Quaker message, or at least his interpretation of it, to anyone who would listen. He appears to have had limited success in most of the areas of America where Quakerism was already established, such as Maryland, New England and New York, but significant success in Jamaica and Barbados. Joseph Nicholson, who had emigrated to Barbados at the same time as Perrot, wrote to Fox: 'Here is sad work and mad work by John'.[75] Surprisingly, Perrot had his greatest success in Virginia despite the strong Quaker presence there before his visit. In all the parts of America and the West Indies affected by the Hat Controversy, the division appears to have lasted into the 1670s at least. This was in spite of the fact that Perrot died in 1665, prior to which he had abandoned many of his Quaker principles. He became a Captain and wore fine clothes and a sword.[76] His opponents claimed that he ran 'into swearing, and trooping, and drunkenness, and

---

[74] Richard Farneworth et al., Truth Vindicated, London, 1665.
[75] Joseph Nicholson to George Fox, Barbados, 10 February 1664, FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.4, no.155. This letter reveals that Jane Stokes was also causing trouble. No doubt Robert Rich was doing likewise.
[76] For a full account of Perrot's activities in America and the West Indies and the progress of the controversy there, see Carroll, John Perrot, pp.65-82, 95-108.

looseness'.[77] Perhaps he had fallen into antinomianism, as some Friends had doubtless feared he would.

John Perrot's death occurred at some point between 30 August and 8 September 1665.[78] Friends spread the rumour that he died miserably and in debt.[79] However, this does not seem likely considering the wealth he had acquired in the service of Thomas Modyford, Governor of Barbados. The report was probably Quaker sour grapes because Perrot had had the audacity to die without repenting.

Whereas the effects of the Hat Controversy could still be felt in the 1670s in America, the controversy in England really only outlived Perrot by a year. The longevity of the troubles in America and the West Indies was largely due to the geographical distance from London, the centre of Quaker authority. In England, leading Friends appear to have successfully overcome the controversy in a comparatively short period of time. Most of the controversial literature was produced during 1663 and 1664. The volume of printed material produced was not large so it is possible that Friends who lived at a distance from London heard little about the controversy during these years. There were

---

[77] Something in Answer to a Book, p.3.

[78] Both Wing and The Dictionary of National Biography give '1671?' As the date of Perrot's death. However, Henry Cadbury has used Perrot's will at the Record Office in Spanish Town, Jamaica, to tie Perrot's death down to some time between 30 August 1665, when he drew up his will, and 8 September 1665, when the will was proved: [Henry Cadbury], 'The End of a Schismatic', Friends Intelligencer, 112 (1955), pp.296-297, cited in Carroll, John Perrot, p.82, and in Cadbury's own additional notes in Braithwaite, Second Period, p.671, where he corrects the date from 7 to 8 September. Perrot certainly does not appear to have written anything after 1665, which further reinforces Cadbury's dating.

[79] John Taylor, A Loving and Friendly Invitation, London, 1683, p.9, cited in Carroll, John Perrot, p.82.

several pamphlets produced by leading Friends at this time, exhorting Friends to maintain their testimony to the Truth and warning them against being drawn aside by divisive spirits. However, they tended to steer clear of specifically mentioning either Perrot or the hat.[80]

It is clear that leading Friends also kept each other informed by letter about the progress of the controversy around the country. For example, George Whitehead informed Fox that Friends in Woodbridge, Suffolk were badly affected by the division and that Edmund Crosse was the chief instrument of the trouble there but that 'this county is as clear of it as the most'. He was writing from Stoke.[81] Similarly, James Parkes informed John Lawson that William Salt was not receiving any support from Friends in Windsor.[82] Whilst Perrot was still in England, Friends had sent letters ahead to the places he visited warning Friends there not to countenance him.[83] They probably also did this when Perrot travelled in America.

---

[80] These pamphlets included: William Baily, The Lambs Government, London, 1663; Edward Burrough, Two General Epistles, London, 1663, published posthumously; Josiah Coale, A Salutation to the Suffering Seed, London, 1663.

[81] George Whitehead to George Fox, 9 November 1663, FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.4, no.95.

[82] James Parkes to John Lawson, Blewbury, Berks., 7 January 1665, FHL, Swarthmore MSS, Vol.4, no.128.

[83] Perrot complained that Friends sent such letters ahead of him to Bristol when he was travelling there, en route to Ireland, around the beginning of 1662: R[ich], Hidden Things Brought to Light, p.11.

Conclusion: The Legacy of the Hat Controversy

The significance of the Hat Controversy lies not so much in the geographical extent or the numerical strength of the controversy as in its legacy. Perrot's challenge occasioned developments in the organisation of the Society of Friends which aided leading Friends in their attempts to limit the activities of enthusiastic individuals and to strengthen corporate authority. However these developments, particularly Fox's establishment of a hierarchical system of business meetings, provoked further resentment and initiated more serious division among Friends.

Carroll has described Perrot as 'the greatest schismatic in seventeenth-century Quakerism'.[84] Even taking into consideration Perrot's successes across the Atlantic, this does seem to be an over-statement. The Wilkinson-Story Controversy lasted much longer and the Keithian Controversy affected a similar geographical area to that of the Hat Controversy. As previously mentioned, it is difficult to determine the numbers involved in the Hat Controversy and the geographical spread within England can only be guessed at by piecing together the disparate references which survive. Braithwaite has ascertained that it was only really the South of England that was affected, particularly London, the Eastern Counties and the South West.[85] These were the areas Perrot visited during the short time between his return from Rome and his emigration to Barbados.

---

[84] Carroll, John Perrot, p.44.
[85] Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.233, 237.

Also, it is not clear whether or not separatist meetings for worship were established as in subsequent controversies. It is probable that most of Perrot's supporters continued to attend their local meetings, the men causing offence by keeping their hats on during prayer.

Leading Friends appear to have been relatively successful at limiting the spread of the Hat Controversy in England through their letters and publications and, in 1666, they decided to take action to put a stop to the division. In May 1666, a group of leading Friends met in London to discuss the division. They made a series of resolutions to overcome the division and drew this up as a testimony that was sent to Friends to be read out in their meetings throughout the country.[86]

They declared that these people who 'under pretence of crying down man and forms do cry down the ministry and meeting', should not be allowed any office within the 'Church of Christ', nor should they have the spiritual right to judge the ministry of others or the Gospel of Christ. They asserted that:

> If any difference arise in the church or amongst them that profess to be members thereof…that the church with the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ have the power without the assent of such as dissent from their doctrine and practices, to hear and determine the same…[and] that if judgement so given be risen against and denied by the party condemned, then he or she…ought to be rejected.

---

[86] 'A Testimony from the Brethren who were met together at London in the third month 1666', transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.43-45.

The brethren declared that if the gifts of any Friend travelling in the ministry were objected to by Friends who were sound in faith, they should desist from their ministry until reconciled to Friends and approved by elders and members of the Church. If they then degenerated again and refused to accept the judgement that they were unfit for the Quaker ministry, they should be declared against publicly and Friends warned not to countenance them. These leading Friends also warned Friends against printing or spreading any books which tended towards division and advised that anything intended for publication should first be viewed by faithful and sound Friends, as had previously been done. Finally they advised that only 'such as are felt in a measure of the universal spirit of Truth' should be allowed to take part in the public business of the Church.

'The Testimony of the Brethren', as it is usually called, was signed by eleven Friends including Farnsworth and George Whitehead. George Fox took no part in either the meeting or the issuing of the testimony because he was imprisoned in Scarborough Castle at the time. Moore claims that this document marks the end of the early Quaker movement.[87] It certainly does show the extent to which Quakerism had changed during the course of about ten years and it demonstrated the direction in which the movement would continue to develop as the century progressed. Such concepts as the right of leading Friends and indeed the members, or meeting, to judge individuals and their gifts, were clearly set down here.

---

[87] Moore, The Light, p.225.

There was undoubtedly resentment in the counties against this obvious assertion of the authority of London Friends. Indeed criticism came from such well respected Friends as Bristol Friend, George Bishop, who warned:

> Take heed how you set up your laws and constitutions over His dominion, or how you take upon you to make laws to His dominion, who lives for ever. Many have attempted it, and have been broken to pieces: and if you do the same, the same will be your portion from the hand of the Lord.[88]

However, there does not appear to have been an immediate backlash against 'The Testimony of the Brethren'. From the point of view of bringing an end to the Hat Controversy, this document gave the go-ahead to Friends in those areas affected to do something about it.

George Fox was released from prison in September 1666. Not long after his return to London in November 1666, a meeting was held to restore unity. Ellwood attended this meeting and reports that many were restored to soundness and few were lost.[89] Many of Perrot's supporters condemned the spirit which had led them to keep their hats on during prayer and, Fox claims, they 'said that Friends were more righteous than they'.[90] The Hat Controversy was to all intents and purposes over. Compared to the later internal divisions of the Society of Friends, unity had been restored fairly quickly. Perrot's supporters in England had probably lost heart following his death. However, it is also

---

[88] 'George Bishop against a Paper of Orders (1666)', abridged transcript in T[homas] C[risp], The Testimony of Isaac Penington, London, 1681, pp.10-11.
[89] Ellwood, The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, p.243.
[90] Nickalls, Fox's Journal, p.511.

likely that the vast majority of Friends had come to realise that even if it was spiritually preferable to allow the individual absolute freedom to follow the leadings of the inner light, it could be dangerous to do so. Such freedom simply was not viable in a time of severe persecution. Moreover, Friends were increasingly realising that there probably would not be an immediate eschatological event and that a certain amount of uniformity and structure was necessary if Friends were going to survive as a religious society in the future.

With the Hat Controversy behind him, Fox set about introducing an organisational structure which would establish the Society of Friends as a united body and which, he hoped, would prevent serious divisions in the future. From 1667, Fox travelled around the country setting up a hierarchical system of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, ultimately accountable to the London Yearly Meeting which he also re-established. From 1671 he began to encourage the introduction of women's business meetings and in 1673 he instituted the Second Day's Morning Meeting in London.[91] The Hat Controversy had strengthened the very source of Perrot's dissatisfaction: the exertion of corporate authority over the authority of the Spirit. By manifesting the dangers of internal strife, the Hat Controversy had provoked the establishment of a hierarchical structure which

---

[91] The main task of the Morning Meeting was to scrutinise Friends' books before publication. The Meeting of Sufferings, which was responsible for presenting Friends' sufferings to Parliament and others and for advising Friends on matters relating to persecution, was established in 1676. For a full account of Fox's activities in setting up Friends' business meetings, see Braithwaite, Second Period, Chapters 9 and 10. For a detailed explanation of the system of meetings and the types of business transacted by the different meetings, see Leachman, 'From an Unruly Sect', Chapters 2 and 3.

placed authority clearly in the body as a means of limiting division.

Ironically, it was the establishment of this system of organisation and communication which renewed division among Friends. Clearly the concerns that Perrot and his supporters had expressed had not gone away. In 1673, they resurfaced and there was a reawakening of the Hat Controversy with the publication of an anonymous pamphlet, The Spirit of the Hat. The pamphlet has been attributed to William Mucklow, a disaffected Friend who wrote a broadside dealing with very similar issues.[92] Whether or not Mucklow really was the author is unknown. However, it is clear that the author of The Spirit of the Hat had either been involved in the Hat Controversy himself or knew people who had been involved. Evidently, he, or Friends of his acquaintance, had never been reunited with the main body of Friends, as he complains about Quaker marriage and burial being denied to those known as 'hatmen'.[93] This pamphlet is a defence of the freedom of the Spirit to direct the individual, attacking the Quaker insistence that the individual should yield to the judgement of the main body of Friends:

> Very many will do nothing without the authority of the Body, though it be never so clear in them; and this sets up the Body above Christ.[94]

This pamphlet differs from the majority of those produced during the Hat Controversy itself. The tone is more virulent, setting

---

[92] William Mucklow, Liberty of Conscience Asserted, London, 1673/4, broadside.
[93] The Spirit of the Hat, London, 1673, p.13.
[94] The Spirit of the Hat, p.20.

the tone for subsequent controversial literature. More significantly, it is a direct, personal attack upon George Fox. The author condemns both Fox 'and other leading-men, in their Monday, or second-day's meeting at Devonshire-House'. He also attacks what he terms, 'Foxonian-unity'.[95] In other words, the author is attacking both Fox himself and the instruments with which he may enforce his authority.

By the time that The Spirit of the Hat was printed, Fox's pre-eminence among Friends was complete. This had largely come about through the death of many of those with whom he had shared authority before and during the early 1660s. Richard Hubberthorne, Edward Burrough, Richard Farnsworth and Francis Howgill were among those who died during the 1660s. Fox's personal efforts in the establishment of the network of Quaker business meetings had also served to assert his personal authority, perhaps unintentionally. The business meetings could therefore be viewed as symbols of Fox's authority. These meetings could also be regarded as an attempt to enforce uniformity. The majority of Friends no doubt came to see the necessity of repressing Perrot, an embarrassing and possibly mentally-disturbed mystic.[96] However, there must have been many who were uneasy about the establishment of the network of meetings and the confirmation of the centralisation of Quaker authority in London, and particularly in Fox himself. For some this was too great an imposition upon the free-working of the Spirit of Christ. The reawakening of the Hat Controversy with

---

[95] The Spirit of the Hat, [title page], p.11.
[96] It could be argued that Perrot's sufferings in Rome had left him mentally unbalanced.

the publication of The Spirit of the Hat was a relatively minor affair, with only half a dozen pamphlets exchanged.[97] However, it demonstrated a resistance to Fox's authority which was erupting around the country at that very moment and which was about to manifest itself in a controversy which would divide Friends throughout England and would trouble the Society of Friends for some thirty years; the Wilkinson-Story Controversy.

[97] The Spirit of the Hat was answered by William Penn, The Spirit of Alexander the Copper-smith, n.p., 1673. This was in turn answered by Tyranny and Hypocrisy Detected, London, 1673, which is also attributed to William Mucklow although he denied its authorship. Penn answered this pamphlet with, William Penn, Judas and the Jews. William Mucklow, Liberty of Conscience Asserted, was answered by G[eorge] Whitehead, The Apostate Incendiary Rebuked, n.p., 1673.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WILKINSON-STORY CONTROVERSY

Introduction

The Wilkinson-Story Controversy began in Westmorland in the early 1670s and took its name from its two main protagonists, John Wilkinson and John Story. Wilkinson was a farmer from Hutton and Story a farm-labourer from Preston Patrick. Both men had been among the earliest converts to Quakerism and from 1654 had travelled around England spreading the Quaker message, particularly in Bristol, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.[1] They are included in the list of Friends who have come to be revered as the 'Valiant Sixty'.[2]

Like the Hat Controversy, the Wilkinson-Story Controversy arose from the disparity between Friends' belief in the freedom of the light within to illuminate the individual and their need to introduce an element of control to the Society of Friends, to safeguard its future and maintain its identity. The controversy was essentially a defence of the inner light against imposed, human authority. This time, the imposed authority was embodied in George Fox's establishment of the system of Quaker business meetings: the authority of the local meeting over the individual Friend's conscience, the authority of the central bodies in London over the local business

---

[1] Greaves and Zaller, Biographical Dictionary, Vol.3, pp.209, 325-326.
[2] Elfrida Vipont, George Fox and the Valiant Sixty, London, 1975, pp.128-129. Vipont's list is an amended version of that which appears in Ernest E. Taylor, The Valiant Sixty, London, 1947, pp.42-43.

meeting, the authority of George Fox over the Society of Friends as a whole and, most controversially, the authority of the women's meeting over any male Friend who wished to marry.

It will be argued that the chief objection of the leaders of the Wilkinson-Story party was to the increasing authority of the Quaker leadership, particularly that of Fox himself. However, the local meeting minute books show that rank and file Friends objected primarily to the authority of women's business meetings. This difference did not cause tension between the Wilkinson-Story leadership and their following because each shared the other's concern. It was simply a difference of emphasis. The resentment of rank and file Friends was focused upon the authority of the women's business meetings because they experienced this more immediately. It was the instigators and promoters of the separation who looked beyond this symptom to the development which had caused it: the imposition of the personal authority of Fox and others over the conscience of the individual.

Although this division appears to have caused little trouble overseas, it posed a more serious threat to the Society of Friends in England than the Hat Controversy had done.[3] It affected a much larger geographical area of the country, hundreds of Friends were apparently drawn into it and the pamphlet material produced was greater in volume and virulence

---

[3] Fox complained about Wilkinson-Story publications being sent to Friends throughout the Quaker world but there is no mention of division overseas: G.F. to Thomas Gouldney, London, 20 January 1683, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.197.

than that produced during the Hat Controversy. The Wilkinson-Story Controversy also continued for thirty years. Due in part to the insensitivity leading Friends showed to the dissidents' concerns, Friends never successfully resolved the contention. It merely fizzled out around the turn of the century as the dissidents died. Most significantly, the controversy caused such serious conflict among Friends in some areas that local meetings actually split and separatist meetings were established.

William Braithwaite has provided an account of the chronological development of the controversy, particularly in relation to the events in Westmorland, so it is unnecessary to rehearse this in detail here.[4] However, some discussion of the origins of the controversy is called for, as well as analysis of the issues of contention, Friends' attempts to deal with the division, methods of contending and the effects of the controversy. Where possible, points will be illustrated with reference to the local minute book material relating to the controversy in addition to Friends' correspondence and publications.

The Geographical Extent of the Controversy

From their native Westmorland, Story and Wilkinson travelled around the country, spreading the controversy to many

---

[4] Braithwaite, Second Period, Chapter 11 for events up to 1683; pp.469-482 for brief outlines of events in Reading, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bristol and London.

other parts of England. They gained a great deal of support in Bristol, Wiltshire and Reading, where they were held in high esteem. Other affected areas included Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. Separatist meetings were definitely established in Westmorland, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Wiltshire. Ingle claims that a separatist Quarterly Meeting was set up in Lincolnshire. However, he appears to be mistaken, as the only reference he cites as evidence for this meeting clearly refers to Wiltshire rather than Lincolnshire.[5]

Quakerism in the 1670s and 1680s

During the period of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, Friends were no longer universally regarded as the dangerous revolutionaries that they had been considered during the 1650s and 1660s. Friends continued to suffer persecution and leading Friends remained concerned about the public image of Quakerism. However, Friends became more adept at promoting their own interests and also became somewhat less wary of interaction with other members of society. Government and society's perception of Friends gradually improved to the point that Friends were included within the provisions of the 1689 Toleration Act. However, the developments in Quakerism which earned respectability, aroused resentment among Friends throughout the nation. The Wilkinson-Story Controversy was the most serious but not the only manifestation of this resentment.

---

[5] John Burnyeat to M.F., London, 6 July 1678, FHL, Spence MSS, Vol.3, no.177, cited in Ingle, First Among Friends, p.262, n.87.

The Acquisition of Respectability

The changing perception of Friends was due to certain developments within Quakerism during the 1670s and 1680s. By the 1670s, Friends had universally adopted the peace principle expounded by leading Friends in the early 1660s. This undoubtedly contributed to the gradual realisation that Friends posed no significant threat to the government. However, Friends maintained their refusal to swear oaths and to pay tithes so they were never free from prosecution. The severity of the persecution of Friends varied considerably during the course of the 1670s and 1680s, as it had done during the 1650s and 1660s. The variations were occasioned by political events rather than by the actions of Friends themselves. Friends' sufferings were reduced when monarchs sought to curry favour with religious dissenters to further their own ends. However, sufferings peaked at times of acute national political tension: the early years of the Restoration and the Exclusion Crisis of the early 1680s. The Second Conventicle Act of 1670 also increased persecution.[6]

Richard Greaves and Adrian Davies are amongst those who have recently argued convincingly against the view expressed by some historians that from the 1670s, Friends became increasingly introspective, focusing on their internal developments and withdrawing further from the world.[7] Both

---

[6] Davies, Quakers, p.169. The reasons for the harsh sufferings occasioned by the Second Conventicle Act are explained in Chapter Four.

[7] Greaves cites Ingle, First Among Friends, p.190 and Davies cites Richard T. Vann, The Social Development of English Quakerism, 1655-

Greaves and Davies assert that from around 1670, Friends actually became more willing to associate with other members of society. This undoubtedly contributed to better relations between Friends and their local communities. Provided that it did not compromise their religious beliefs, Davies argues that social interaction with non-Friends was permitted during the 1670s and 1680s. This is demonstrated, for example, by an increasing tendency to invite non-Quaker relatives to attend marriages, Friends' concern for the non-Quaker poor in their communities and by the appointment of Friends to such parochial offices as overseer of the poor.[8]

David Wykes has argued that after 1672 Friends also developed a more pragmatic approach to relations with the state.[9] Both Wykes and Greaves note the political actions of Quakers, lobbying Parliament for concessions to their religious scruples, associating with politicians and campaigning for the election to Parliament of men who favoured religious toleration. Greaves also emphasises the importance of Friends' involvement in the economic sphere and suggests that the most significant factor in explaining the gradual acceptance of Friends by society was, 'the realisation that trading with Quakers and allowing them to thrive in their callings was

---

1755, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969, p.201 as examples of historians who have argued that Friends withdrew further from society from the 1670s onwards: Greaves, 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"? Changing Conceptions of the Quakers in Early Modern Britain', Albion, 33 (2001), pp.24-50; Davies, Quakers, p.210.

[8] Davies, Quakers, pp.199, 203-204, 210-211.

[9] David L. Wykes, 'Friends, Parliament and the Toleration Act', JEH, 45 (1994), pp.42-63. Friends had refused to seek licences under the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence because of their unwillingness to recognise any external authority in matters of religion.

conducive to economic prosperity'.[10] Friends also took a very keen interest in the English legal system. They no longer suffered in silence. They possessed what Craig Horle has described as 'a sophisticated legal defence system'.[11] From the mid-1670s, the Meeting for Sufferings was tireless both in presenting accounts of Friends' sufferings to the government and in advising Friends on the most effective ways of reducing their sufferings under the law.[12]

Throughout the 1670s and 1680s leading Friends continued to be concerned about their public image. They certainly did not sit back and ignore criticism of Quaker belief and practices. It will be seen below how leading Friends dealt with the criticisms of the Wilkinson-Story party. During this period, they also engaged in much public debate and pamphlet warfare with nonconformist opponents such as the Baptist, Thomas Hicks, and Congregationalist, William Haworth.[13] Friends' determination to defend their beliefs against the challenges of their opponents and to prove their doctrine of sufficient orthodoxy to be included within the Toleration Act does not fit with the theory of an introspective religious society. In fact, since the Act did not reduce Friends' sufferings resulting from their stance on oaths and tithes, Wykes has argued that, for

---

[10] Greaves, 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"? Changing Conceptions of the Quakers in Early Modern Britain', Albion, 33 (2001), pp.24-50.
[11] Craig W. Horle, The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660-1688, Philadelphia, 1988, p.18.
[12] For a description of the strategies by which Friends endeavoured to limit the extent of their sufferings under the law, see Horle, The Quakers and the English Legal System, Chapter 5.
[13] See Chapter Four.

acknowledgement by the establishment that they were part of the Protestant mainstream.[14] This acknowledgement probably was highly valued by leading Friends. However, the majority of Friends almost certainly felt the freedom to worship afforded by the Act to be of greater significance.

Wykes has expressed surprise both that Friends were included within the terms of the Toleration Act and that Friends accepted the terms of inclusion. Friends appear to have readily registered their meeting-houses in accordance with the Act.[15] In fact, both points may be explained by the acquired authority of the central bodies of Quaker organisation. The abandonment of Friends' earlier objection to any compromise with the state over matters of religion certainly originated with leading Friends in London. Through the advice of the Meeting for Sufferings to the meetings in the localities, this attitude was transmitted to Friends throughout the country. Moreover, it was largely through the actions of these central bodies, that Friends had acquired the respectability necessary to ensure their inclusion in the Act, despite the embarrassment caused at this time by Penn's association with James II.

As Caroline Leachman has asserted:

> Far from being the somewhat wild, enthusiastic individuals, who obeyed the promptings of the 'light' so

---

[14] Wykes, 'Friends, Parliament and the Toleration Act', JEH, 45 (1994), pp.42-63.
[15] Wykes, 'Friends, Parliament and the Toleration Act', JEH, 45 (1994), pp.42-63.

> spontaneously in the 1650s, Quakers by the 1670s and '80s had become bastions of peace and order.[16]

Leading Friends had successfully limited the excesses of enthusiastic individuals and brought order and respectability to the Society of Friends through the exertion of corporate authority. The establishment of the system of business meetings had been the most effective means of accomplishing this. The system of meetings acted as a means of communication from the centre of Quaker authority in London down through the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to the Friends of each Particular Meeting. The exertion of discipline by the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings could check the behaviour of errant individuals and, as will be seen below, the Morning Meeting's oversight of Friends' publications limited the expression of opinions of which leading Friends disapproved. It was the central bodies in London which encouraged the aforementioned developments relating to the use of the legal system, engagement in politics and increased interaction with society. Although this system of business meetings brought order and respectability to the Society of Friends, the Wilkinson-Story Controversy demonstrates that it did not initially bring unity.

Resistance to Internal Developments

The developments within Quakerism which resulted in respectability provoked internal unrest from the outset. The Wilkinson-Story Controversy was the most serious manifestation

---

[16] Leachman, 'From an Unruly Sect', p.285.

of resistance to the establishment of the system of Quaker business meetings and the increasing authority of George Fox. However, it was not the only one.

Undoubtedly there were pockets of dissension developing independently among Friends in various areas of the country before and during the 1670s and 1680s. This is evidenced, for instance, by the publication of The Spirit of the Hat against 'Foxonian-unity', as described in the previous chapter. An epistle from the 1673 Yearly Meeting, though written largely in response to the publication of The Spirit of the Hat, mentions differences in 'several counties'.[17]

A separatist Monthly Meeting established in York in late 1683 does not appear to have been involved in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy itself. The division here arose over the issue of remarriage within a year of the death of a spouse, which was not a point at issue in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. However, Braithwaite explains that the division 'developed on Wilkinson-Story lines' and the separatists condemned all imposed forms.[18] Indeed, the separatists shared many common grievances with the Wilkinson-Story party, including the power of the women's meeting to judge couples' fitness to marry and the recording of papers of condemnation. David Scott has observed that most of the York separatists had been 'convinced' before 1670.[19] They insisted upon personal

---

[17] Letter dated London, 26 May 1673, FHL, Portfolio MSS, Vol.23, no.134.
[18] Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.475-478.
[19] Friends often termed their conversion to Quakerism, 'convincement'.

freedom 'in the Spirit' and objected to the principles of 'Foxonian-unity'. Nearly a quarter of the Quaker community in York joined the separatists.[20] Clearly, this was an example of serious local disaffection, the proponents of which shared certain convictions with the Wilkinson-Story party but did not actually affiliate themselves to that group.

The leader of the York separatists, John Cox, moved to London where he joined with disaffected Quaker, Thomas Kent, and held separate meetings from 1686 onwards.[21] London Friends viewed them as abettors of the Wilkinson-Story party but were unsure of the ground of their separation, other than 'because of the good order and strictness of godly discipline practised amongst us'. Cox and Kent attracted many of the various malcontent Friends or, 'loose, prejudiced, envious and bitter spirits', who tended to gravitate towards London. London Friends were afraid that Cox and Kent's 'separate private meetings at unusual places and seasons in and about this city' would cause offence and bring reproach and new sufferings upon Friends so they issued a paper disowning their separation and spirit of division.[22] At this time, Friends were enjoying a reduction in persecution due to James II's attempts to unite Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics against the Anglican

---

[20] David Scott, Quakerism in York, 1650-1720, University of York, Borthwick Paper No.80, 1991, pp.16-20.
[21] Braithwaite has pointed out that their meetings developed into the Harp Lane separatist meeting: Braithwaite, Second Period, p.481. This meeting was frequented by Wilkinson-Story supporters and various other discontented Quakers. Cox became a Baptist in 1691 and Kent later became involved in the Keithian Controversy.
[22] Friends in London to all the Monthly Meetings in and about London, 24 January 1687, FHL, Portfolio MSS, Vol.2, no.38. This is signed by 61 Friends and endorsed on 1 February 1687 by Richard Richardson on behalf of the London Six Weeks Meeting.

Church, in order to secure greater freedom for Roman Catholics. Some 1200 imprisoned Friends were freed following James II's general pardon to Dissenters of March 1686.[23] Friends' paper against Cox and Kent was issued just three months before James II issued his Declaration of Indulgence of April 1687. They knew from experience how easily such a situation could be reversed and they were not prepared to have this respite from sufferings overturned by the actions of an unruly collection of disaffected individuals.

The Personal Price of Separation

It will be argued that separation from the main body of Friends was not undertaken lightly. Such were the social and economic repercussions of schism that many, perhaps most, dissatisfied Friends did not separate from the body. Although the 1670s and 1680s saw greater interaction between Friends and other members of society, there were limits to this. Undoubtedly, the level of Friends' participation in community life varied from place to place and there remained certain aspects of Quaker life in which Friends maintained their distance from others.

Wilkinson and Story's defence of the freedom of the inner light against the increasing formalism of Quakerism must have appealed especially to those who had been convinced during the early years of Quakerism. However, these were precisely the

---

[23] Watts, Dissenters, p.257.

people for whom emotional ties to the main body of Friends were strongest. As Davies has pointed out:

> Conversion led Friends voluntarily to seek greater association with one another and the sect became the main focus of social identity so far as adherents were concerned.[24]

This was particularly true during the first two decades of Quakerism when relations between Friends and the rest of society were at their worst.

Fellowship was of great importance to Friends. Not only were Friends united by their belief in the inner light, they also suffered together, they shared the same peculiar habits of speech, conduct and dress and they supported each other in sickness and misfortune. The opportunities for socialising with non-Quaker neighbours were limited because Friends rejected most popular pastimes and sports and frowned upon the frequenting of ale-houses. Perhaps most significantly, Friends were not permitted to marry outside the Society. This maintained their detachment from society at large. Friends also traded with each other and gave financial support to their impoverished members.

By separating from the main body of Friends, Wilkinson, Story and their supporters risked losing their emotional and economic support system. Poorer Friends simply could not afford to separate from the main body of Friends.[25] Many Friends could

---

[24] Davies, Quakers, p.75.

[25] In Berkshire, the majority of Friends supported Wilkinson and Story, forcing mainstream Friends to separate from them. See below. In this

have coped with the financial implications of separation but the emotional price was too high. It is impossible to estimate the number of Friends who shared Wilkinson and Story's objection to the developments within the Society of Friends. However, there were undoubtedly many more who secretly agreed with them than actually voiced their support for them. Fewer still were actually prepared to join them in establishing separatist meetings.

Only the most ardent defenders of the freedom of the Spirit joined the schism. Even then, separation was a gradual process. Often the opposing sides continued to worship together for some time, even for a few years after the establishment of separatist business meetings, as in both Westmorland and Reading. Clearly the bond of fellowship was hard to break. It is also worth noting that, even once separation was complete, the Wilkinson-Story party continued to regard themselves as Friends, worshipping together in the manner of Friends and supporting each other in their separatist meetings, rather than setting up a new sect.

It should also be noted that separation only occurred in areas where at least one prominent local Friend supported Wilkinson and Story. As previously mentioned, Story and Wilkinson themselves were well reputed, early publishers of Truth. Thomas Curtis, the leader of the Wilkinson-Story party

---

case it was the Wilkinson-Story party which was better placed to provide for poor Friends. The minutes of the opposing business meetings show that both sides continued to support their poorer members.

in Reading, was probably the most highly esteemed Friend in his local community. John Raunce, the leader of the Buckinghamshire Wilkinson-Story party, was a prominent local Friend and physician. It was only the leadership of such individuals which gave rank and file Friends the confidence to follow them into separation from the main body of Friends.

The Issues of Contention

It will be seen that the Wilkinson-Story party sought primarily to defend the freedom of the inner light to illuminate the individual. This is demonstrated by their resistance to set forms in Quaker worship and organisation. They objected to the subjection of individual consciences and local meetings to the dictates of Fox and other leading Friends, as embodied in the network of business meetings controlled by the central bodies in London. Whilst Wilkinson-Story writers expressed their resentment of the personal authority of Fox, Friends in the localities objected primarily to the power of women's business meetings to judge couples' fitness to marry.

A good résumé of most of the original points of contention may be gleaned from some queries delivered to Wilkinson, his answers thereto and from the paper he and Story presented to the meeting at Draw-well near Sedbergh in April 1676. Story also received a set of queries but his answers are less informative, being mostly denials. The Wilkinson-Story

party objected to forms and to the practice of things imposed by man without Scriptural authority or precedent. They took exception to condemnations of Friends who had transgressed Quaker principles being recorded for posterity. Whilst they agreed that Friends should not pay tithes, Wilkinson explained:

> I would have no other force amongst Friends used, but the Word of Life, to stir them up with testimonies for God, against the grand oppression of tithes; which I have suffered the spoiling of my goods for denying this many years.[26]

In other words, they believed that this was a matter to be decided by the individual conscience. Although they denied it, the Wilkinson-Story group clearly had a similarly lenient attitude towards worshipping secretly during times of persecution, as many of the party from Westmorland had done so themselves.[27] They saw no necessity in women's meetings or in laying intentions of marriage before them and they objected to any 'groanings, sighing, soundings and singings' during worship that may proceed from deceitful spirits.[28] The Wilkinson-Story supporters also believed that Quaker business meetings should be attended only by those local Friends specifically appointed to that task.

---

[26] 'Seven Queries' delivered to John Wilkinson by Robert Barrow and others and Wilkinson's answers thereto, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, pp.7-9. Neither these queries nor the ones sent to Story are dated but they were probably issued at some point prior to the meeting at Draw-well in 1676.

[27] 'Sixteen Queries' delivered to John Story by R.W. and T.L. and his answers thereto, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, pp.9-14. See further references to this issue below.

[28] A testimony presented by John Wilkinson and John Story to the meeting at Draw-well, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th Part, pp.37-40.

This last point is interesting. It would have been more in keeping with their attitude towards the freedom of the inner light if they had argued that business meetings should be attended by anyone who felt leadings from the Spirit to attend. However, it is clear that what they really objected to was outside interference in their meetings. In arguing for select business meetings, they complained:

> that some of other counties, and some amongst themselves, not chosen by the churches, have come and intermeddled with them, and with their business, and usurped authority over them, whom they never gave power to.[29]

It was the imposition of the authority of other Friends over themselves that they objected to and which they hoped to prevent by disallowing others from attending their business meetings. As the controversy developed and spread around the country, resentment of imposed authority and the institutions of church government, which enabled that imposition, came to the fore and some of the more local causes of disaffection faded into the background.

Quaker Business Meetings

It will be argued that Wilkinson-Story supporters recognised the need for business meetings but they objected to the centrally-controlled network of business meetings established by Fox. To Fox and leading Friends, the introduction of the system of meetings was justified by their

---

[29] An extract from the 'Paper of Separation', quoted in Accuser, pp.267-268.

belief that the group was imbued with spiritual authority; that the inner light would reveal the same Truth to all Friends. However, the Wilkinson-Story party objected to the network of business meetings because this system clearly sought to bring the individual conscience under subjection to the direction of the central bodies. Although this predominantly affected matters of behaviour and practice, the Morning Meeting also sought to exert some control over Friends' religious beliefs.

The system of Quaker business meetings established during the late 1660s and early 1670s was a development necessary to the survival of the Society of Friends as a religious institution. The Hat Controversy had demonstrated that some structure of church government was needed to hold Friends together as a coherent religious group. Even before the Restoration, Friends had realised the necessity of introducing some level of organisation to the Quaker movement.[30] However, it was the challenges posed by the severe persecution of the early Restoration period and the Hat Controversy which provided the impetus to Fox to set up the nation-wide network of business meetings.

The system of business meetings promoted communication among Friends throughout the country, providing encouragement and advice, especially during times of persecution. Through the directions transmitted from the central bodies in London down through the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to each Particular

---

[30] Rosemary Moore has given an excellent description of the gradual developments towards a regular church order among Friends, which began in the 1650s: Moore, The Light, Chapter 10.

Meeting, this system was also intended to bring unity of behaviour and practice to the Society of Friends and to curb the excesses of enthusiastic individuals. This was intended to improve the public image of Quakerism, so that it would not be persecuted out of existence, and to guard against the potentially divisive effect of the inner light working on the conscience of every individual Friend. Despite the denials of Fox and other leading Friends, the system of business meetings did impose limitations on the freedom of the light to guide the individual and the system itself was a very visible symbol of the exertion of some Friends' authority over the consciences of others.

Wilkinson-Story supporters did not object to business meetings in themselves, seeing clearly the need to deal with financial and other practical matters. For this reason, Wilkinson-Story schismatics set up separate business meetings as well as Meetings for Worship. In fact, they often began to transact business separately before they started to worship apart from other Friends. In Wiltshire and Berkshire, Wilkinson-Story supporters even seized the minute books in order to continue recording the proceedings of their separate business meetings.[31] Indeed, in Wiltshire, the Wilkinson-Story party also took the Quarterly Meeting's public stock and John Maltravers paid it to a prisoner as a gift.[32]

---

[31] Reading MM Minutes (mainstream), p.1; Wiltshire QM Minutes, fo.2, minutes for 1 April 1678; Chippenham MM Minutes, p.19, minutes for 16 September 1678. The Chippenham Monthly Meeting minute book was finally returned on 16 April 1705.

[32] Wiltshire QM Minutes, fo.31, minutes for 27 December 1681.

It was the hierarchical nature of the system of business meetings to which the Wilkinson-Story party objected. They recognised that this system was a means of imposing the authority of a few Friends over the consciences of others; a means of restricting the freedom of the inner light to guide the individual in areas of both religion and daily life. This was imposition both on a local and national scale. The condemnation of Preston Patrick Friends by the Quarterly Meeting in Westmorland for meeting secretly during persecution, described below, is a good example of imposition on a local scale.

At the national level, the central bodies of Quaker organisation in London became the focus of resentment. The London Yearly Meeting was attended by London ministers and a couple of representatives from each county. It was not open to everyone, yet all Friends were affected by its decisions because its advice on all matters of Quaker life was passed down to every Particular Meeting, via the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings. It is possible that leading Friends realised that the Yearly Meeting could be a focus of resentment. At the 1672 meeting it was decided that this would be an annual meeting and a regular date and other details were agreed upon.[33] However, at the 1673 Yearly Meeting it was decided:

> that the general meeting…about public business appointed the 29th day of the third month [May] 1672 'til further

---

[33] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fos.1-2, minutes of 29 May 1672.

> order be discontinued 'til Friends in God's wisdom shall see a further occasion.[34]

This may have been an attempt to salve the consciences of those who were having difficulty embracing the new system of business meetings. However, this attitude did not last long. The even more exclusive annual meetings of leading Friends, known as Yearly Meetings of Ministers, evidently continued and in 1675 the meeting took notice of:

> the sorrows and sufferings that have come upon the Church of Christ in several places by reason of several disorderly proceedings of some professing the Truth.[35]

It issued a lengthy epistle advising Friends on a number of practical matters, most of which were concerned in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. This epistle was highly directive in tone, declaring that any Friends directly or indirectly discountenancing women's meetings and who 'persist in that work of division' shall be looked upon as 'not in unity with the Church of Christ and order of the Gospel'.[36] The Yearly Meeting was clearly imposing its authority upon Friends in the localities, just as Wilkinson-Story supporters had feared.

The Second Day's Morning Meeting also became a focus of resentment following its establishment in 1673. This, along with the Meeting for Sufferings, which began meeting in 1676,

---

[34] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fo.9, minutes of 22 May 1673.
[35] The decision to resume full Yearly Meetings, attended by representatives from the various counties, was taken at the 1677 Yearly Meeting: YM Minutes, Vol.1, fo.50.
[36] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fos.13-21, minutes of 27 May 1675. The subjects contained in this epistle included women's meetings, sighing, groaning and singing during worship, maintaining Friends' testimony against tithes, continuing public worship during persecution, recording condemnations and judging those disparaging Quaker business meetings.

was even more exclusive than the Yearly Meeting. These two meetings were attended by prominent London Friends. Leading Friends from elsewhere were also welcome to attend when visiting London. The Wilkinson-Story adherents do not appear to have expressed objection to the Meeting for Sufferings specifically. Friends with a more lenient attitude than most towards tithe-payers can have found less cause of complaint against a meeting, the main purpose of which at this time was to reduce the persecution of Friends and to advise Friends on legitimate ways of lessening their sufferings. However, The Second Day's Morning Meeting was particularly resented.

The main task of the Morning Meeting was to exercise control over Friends' writings.[37] Friends wishing to publish a work were required to submit it to the Morning Meeting for approval. The meeting would either approve it, often requiring alterations, and arrange for its printing and distribution or it would disallow it. Books would be disallowed if they expressed opinions with which the meeting disagreed or which it viewed as unsound, if their publication appeared unwise in the current political situation, or if it was feared that their publication would renew hostilities with old adversaries. The meeting would sometimes disallow books simply because someone else had already written a similar book on the same subject. Friends publishing without the approval of the Morning Meeting

---

[37] Although the Meeting of Sufferings also became involved in this process, it was mainly concerned with the practicalities of book production rather than with vetting Friends' works: Thomas O'Malley, '"Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit." A Review of Quaker Control over their Publications 1672-1689', JEH, 33 (1982), pp.72-88.

were personally responsible and financially liable for the printing and distribution of their work.

There was no attempt to impose a written creed upon Friends. However, by controlling Friends' publications, the Morning Meeting was also exercising some control over Friends' belief and behaviour, since only those writings which reflected the opinions of this meeting would be published by an approved Quaker printer. Thomas O'Malley has argued that the fears of the Wilkinson-Story party and other opponents of Fox were justified; that Fox did use the system of church government to impose his notions of uniformity on the movement through the control of Quaker publications by the Morning Meeting. Thus, he argues, diversity of opinion was crushed, and Fox and his allies 'did not temper the "Spirit" so much as stamp on it'.[38] O'Malley overstates the case a little. Basic unity was what mattered to leading Friends, rather than strict uniformity on all the intricacies of religious belief. Also, preventing the publication of enthusiastic sentiments did not stamp them out whilst Friends of enthusiastic tendencies survived. However, by suppressing the expression of such sentiments, Fox and other leading Friends undoubtedly prevented the spread of enthusiasm and ensured that it would gradually die out.

The minute books show little concern in the localities about the attempts of the Friends of the Morning Meeting to control the expression of Friends' religious beliefs. However,

---

[38] O'Malley, '"Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit." A Review of Quaker Control over their Publications 1672-1689', JEH, 33 (1982), pp.72-88.

serious concern was expressed by the Wilkinson-Story writers, particularly William Rogers, who frequently attacked the Morning Meeting in his pamphlets. For example, he addressed The Sixth Part of the Christian-Quaker against the Morning Meeting, attacking its members for pretending 'to be invested with spiritual power to correct or suppress' Friends' writings.[39]

Rogers had more cause than most to hate the Morning Meeting because it approved numerous pamphlets against him and funded their publication, while he presumably had to meet the cost of his own publications himself. As a wealthy merchant, he was able to do this but he must have resented the fact that his opponents did not have to pay for their own printing. It should also be remembered that Rogers was from Bristol. Such was the rivalry between Bristol and London that, in this area, resentment of the authority of London Friends was undoubtedly a greater source of conflict than objection to the authority of women's business meetings.

The Authority of George Fox

It is clear that the Wilkinson-Story group objected to the imposition of the authority of the business meeting over the individual Friend. It is equally clear that, because Fox had been personally responsible for the introduction of the system of business meetings, they believed that he had instituted those meetings as a means of imposing his own

---

[39] W[illiam] R[ogers], The Sixth Part of the Christian-Quaker, London, 1681, p.4.

authority over the Society of Friends as a whole. They must have feared that their religious group was in danger of becoming an autocracy.

Although it is not clear how important objection to the exertion of Fox's authority was to the initial outbreak of dissension in Westmorland, this objection became increasingly central to the controversy. This is particularly evident in the writings of Wilkinson-Story supporters. For example, when Friends issued the 1677 paper of condemnation against Wilkinson, Story and their supporters, discussed below, Jeffery Bullock responded, claiming:

> so far as I can understand, that the criminal facts which these Quakers are charged to be guilty of, was that…they did not receive and embrace the orders of George Fox…[40]

Rogers went further, arguing that by imposing these innovations upon Friends, Fox was largely to blame for causing the differences within the Society.[41]

Women's Business Meetings

Although resentment of the authority of the London meetings and of George Fox personally was central to the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, as expressed in the writings of Rogers, Bullock and others, it will be seen that for the majority of Wilkinson-Story supporters, the greatest source of conflict was the authority of women's business meetings in the

---

[40] Jeffery Bullock, A Testimony Against the 66 Judges, n.p., n.d., p.2.
[41] Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, [title page].

matter of marriage. Many meetings either ignored Fox's 1671 advice that women's business meetings be established or they postponed doing so for some years until they were convinced of the benefit of such meetings. Acceptance or rejection of Fox's suggestion cannot in itself be used to gauge involvement in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. However, it was only in places where women's business meetings were involved in the scrutiny of Friends' marriages that division arose. It will also be argued that, in tackling the controversy, some leading Friends made a distinction between local Friends with a genuine religious objection to the authority of women's meetings and the promoters of the division who publicly attacked the authority of the Quaker leadership. The former were sometimes treated with leniency, while the latter were invariably condemned in the strongest terms, because of leading Friends' concern for the public image of Quakerism.

Women held business meetings in London from the mid to late-1650s onwards.[42] However, in most other parts of the country, women did not hold business meetings distinct from the men until at least the 1670s. In 1671, Fox issued an epistle urging Friends to establish women's business meetings.[43] Whilst Friends in some places, such as Buckinghamshire, failed to do so at this time because they could not agree over the matter or

---

[42] Writing in 1680, Mary Elson recalled that the women's business meeting was established 'betwixt three or four and twenty years ago' and that its main purpose at that time was to ensure that 'all the sick, the weak, the widows and the fatherless, should be minded and looked after in their distress', Anne Whitehead and Mary Elson, An Epistle for True Love, London, 1680, pp.11-12. Two women's business meetings were set up in London during the late 1650s or very early 1660s, the Box Meeting and the Two Weeks Meeting: Braithwaite, Beginnings, pp.340-342 and Braithwaite, Second Period, p.272.

[43] George Fox to Friends, reproduced in Accuser, pp.98-100.

did not deem it necessary, Friends in other places, including Westmorland, readily acceded to this suggestion.[44]

At this point there was no mention of women's meetings being involved in the process of judging couples' clearness to marry. Resentment of women's business meetings became a very serious issue when Fox began to insist that women's meetings should become involved in this process. This was recommended in the advice of the 1675 London Yearly Meeting and in the publication of Fox's Encuragement to all the Womens-Meetings in 1676, although women's meetings in some areas were considering intentions of marriage before this.[45] Indeed, it appears that the women's meeting in London was involved in approving marriages during the early 1660s, as this was one of the things Perrot supporter, John Harwood, objected to in 1663.[46]

Fox ordered that Friends who wished to marry must submit their intentions of marriage twice to the women's Monthly Meeting as well as twice to the men's. The marriage could not go ahead unless it had the approval of both meetings. For many Friends, this was going too far. Male Friends had to submit themselves to the scrutiny and judgement of the women Friends if they wished to marry. This was too radical an innovation for seventeenth-century male sensibilities. Wilkinson-Story supporters also felt that Friends had been conned into

---

[44] See discussion of how Bristol and Westmorland Friends reacted to this epistle below.
[45] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fo.18-19; G[eorge] F[ox], This is an Encuragement to all the Womens-Meetings, n.p., 1676. See again the example of Westmorland below.
[46] Harwood, To All People that Profess the Eternal Truth, p.7.

establishing women's meetings, as these had first been recommended to them so that women may be involved in poor relief and similar matters. Now, these meetings had been given the power to judge couples' clearness to marry. 'This', argued Rogers, 'is not like plain dealing, and the fruit thereof is manifest to be evil'.[47]

It should be noted that it was not only male Friends who questioned the powers of women's meetings. Some women were wary of assuming such power to themselves. Mary Penington not only saw no need for such meetings in rural areas. She also feared the consequences of women's meetings:

> Great was the conflict in me, between a fear of letting fall this testimony of ancient good Friends, and being an occasion of discord among those Friends of the men's meeting.

Her concern for the testimony of ancient Friends evidently won out, as she joined the women's Monthly Meeting in South Buckinghamshire when 'we were but few in number and very feeble' and before the meeting became involved in business matters.[48] She later wrote a paper to women Friends who were dissatisfied with women's meetings. In this, she emphasised many advantages of women's business meetings, including the fact that women were better placed than men to enquire into women Friends' clearness to marry. She stressed that it was

---

[47] Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, p.66.
[48] M.P., 'A Testimony to the Lord's power at the women's meeting at J.M.'s and to the service in general', transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fo.159. This paper is undated but it was probably written in early 1677 as it mentions that the women have been holding meetings for about two years.

'more suitable to the bashfulness of a woman to lay her intention before those of her own sex' first. Mary Penington also noted that the final decision to allow a marriage remained with the men's meeting.[49]

Clearly, the men's meeting still exercised authority over the women's meeting. William Loddington made the point:

> Women Friends meeting by themselves may without the least suspicion of usurping authority over the men, confer and reason together…in such things as are most proper and suitable for them, still submitting to the wisdom of God in the men's meetings: whereas being mixed together, if a man should make a motion about any business and a woman should stand up and signify her dislike of it, though in most mild and tender words, would not any man…conclude the women in such meetings had as much power as the man?[50]

Quaker women were given a lot more responsibility in church business than their counterparts in any other Christian denomination. However, their role was still subservient to that of the men.[51] Nonetheless, the Wilkinson-Story supporters clearly felt that the women's meetings had been given too much authority.

As Anne Laurence has argued, mid-seventeenth-century nonconformist men were prepared to recognise women's spiritual

---

[49] M.P., 'For those women Friends that are dissatisfied at present with the women's meeting distinct from the men, and having collections and several businesses apart', [Armscote?], 7 September 1678, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.159-160.
[50] William Loddington, The Good Order of Truth Justified, London, 1685, p.5.
[51] Christine Trevett, Women and Quakerism in the 17th Century, York, 1991, p.81.

authority in certain arenas: as preservers of religion in the household, spiritual examples and sometimes as prophetesses. However, even radical male nonconformists discouraged women's meetings because they feared that women who exercised authority within women's meetings would expect to extend that authority to the whole congregation. As Laurence explains, men objected to the possibility of women exercising authority over men.[52] During the 1670s, these fears were realised among Friends. Participation in the womanly activity of poor relief was one thing. However, for many Friends, the exertion of women's authority over men wishing to marry was completely unacceptable.

Such was the importance to the controversy of the power of women's meetings to judge intentions of marriage, that the division rarely affected areas where women's meetings were not given this power. Buckinghamshire is a good example of this. In the south of the county, known as the 'Upperside', the women's Monthly Meeting was involved in approving marriages. Although the women first sought to establish a meeting here in 1671, it was not until 1675 that they started to hold regular women's meetings. This delay was due to 'great opposition' to the women's meeting being concerned with outward business.[53] In 1677, the women's Monthly Meeting became involved in assessing couples' clearness to marry and other business matters and this

---

[52] Anne Laurence, 'A Priesthood of She-Believers: Women and Congregations in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England', in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., Women in the Church, Studies in Church History, 27, Oxford, 1990, pp.345-363.
[53] Upperside Women's MM Minutes, fos.3-4.

opposition developed into schism. A separatist meeting was established in High Wycombe.[54]

The Wilkinson-Story faction in South Buckinghamshire was led by John Raunce, a doctor from High Wycombe, and his son-in-law, Charles Harris. They stirred up trouble by encouraging couples to refuse to lay their intentions of marriage before the women's Monthly Meeting. The most troublesome example of their machinations was the marriage of Timothy Child and Mary Sexton. On 6 March 1682, undoubtedly at the instigation of Harris, Raunce and other Wilkinson-Story supporters, this couple laid their intention to marry before the men's Monthly Meeting but refused to submit their intention to the women's meeting. When asked the reason for their refusal, Child argued that, 'women must be silent in the church, and are not permitted to speak'.[55] The Upperside men's Monthly Meeting tried many times to reason with them but the couple married without the approval of either the men's or the women's Monthly Meetings in September 1682 and the men's meeting eventually issued a paper of condemnation against their disorderly marriage in March 1684.[56]

Buckinghamshire Quarterly Meeting was also affected by the case of Child and Sexton after it was referred to this meeting in June 1682.[57] There were angry scenes, with Charles

---

[54] The date of the establishment of this meeting is unclear, although it was definitely some time prior to May 1684 as there is a reference in the Upperside men's Monthly Meeting minutes to the receipt of a letter from this meeting: Upperside Men's MM Minutes, p.138, minutes for 5 May 1684.
[55] Upperside Men's MM Minutes, p.103.
[56] Upperside Men's MM Minutes, pp. 112-113, 128-132.
[57] Buckinghamshire QM Minutes, fo.63, minutes for 28 June 1682.

Harris reportedly declaring that 'whores and rogues come to the men's and women's meetings'.[58] When the Quarterly Meeting declared that Upperside Monthly Meeting had acted fairly, the Wilkinson-Story party twice seized the minute book and the two sides recorded opposite testimonies therein, with each side accusing the other of furthering the contention.[59]

It is clear from this case that the Wilkinson-Story Controversy caused a great deal of strife among Friends in South Buckinghamshire. However, in North Buckinghamshire, Friends do not appear to have been touched by the division at all. They were obviously aware of the trouble in the south of the county, through the attendance of some of their members at the Quarterly Meeting. However, their Monthly Meeting was unaffected. This was almost certainly due to the fact that the women Friends in North Buckinghamshire did not hold proper business meetings at this time. The failure to hold such meetings does not indicate that North Buckinghamshire Friends objected to Fox's authority or to his system of business meetings. They copied Yearly Meeting epistles into their Monthly Meeting minute book, indicating that they did not resent that meeting's advice.[60] North Buckinghamshire Friends evidently decided to wait until they saw a need for women's business meetings before introducing one. In January 1700, when North Buckinghamshire women Friends eventually sought to set up a Monthly Meeting, they faced none of the opposition that the

---

[58] Upperside Men's MM Minutes, p.107, minutes for 3 July 1682.
[59] Buckinghamshire QM Minutes, fos.64-69, minutes for 27 September 1682 to 26 September 1683.
[60] Hogshaw-House Men's MM Minutes, fos.29-30.

Upperside women had experienced in 1671. Women's business meetings and their involvement in approving marriages had become generally accepted among Friends by 1700 and the Lowerside men's meeting readily assented to the establishment of a women's monthly business meeting.[61]

Another interesting point may be gleaned from the example of Buckinghamshire. It is clear that Friends realised that some people did have a genuine conscientious objection to the authority of the women's meeting. They were prepared to exercise a little leniency if that objection was expressed in the right spirit:

> although the meeting be satisfied that where conscience is rightly informed, there can be no just cause for a conscientious scruple in this case, yet so tender a regard is had to conscience, that where any through weakness, short-sightedness or misinformation, have made it really matter of conscience not to go to the women's meeting, in such cases this meeting always hath been, and still is ready to exercise a condescension.

The Upperside Monthly Meeting did not, however, believe that Child and Sexton's objection was a matter of conscience.[62]

Buckinghamshire Friends were not alone in demonstrating a certain amount of tolerance towards those with a conscientious objection to submitting their intention of marriage to the women's meeting. Hertfordshire Friends were also prepared to be

---

[61] Hogshaw-House Women's MM Minutes, [from the back, fo.4]; Hogshaw-House Men's MM Minutes, fo.129.
[62] Upperside Men's MM Minutes, p.107, minutes for 29 May 1682.

lenient. On 18 March 1679, George Whitehead, Robert Duncon and Charles Harris drew up a paper, 'in pursuance of peace and a quiet and peaceable management of Truth's affairs in the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings at Hertford'. This document was endorsed two days later by John Crook, who had been absent at the time, and it was evidently an attempt to end the contention occasioned by the Wilkinson-Story Controversy among Friends in that area.[63] The importance to the Wilkinson-Story Controversy of the issues of women's business meetings and intentions of marriage is demonstrated by the fact that nine out of the ten articles contained in this paper related to one or both of these issues. The tenth was a general exhortation 'that all heats, passions, contentions, contradictions, strifes' be watched against and avoided.

In this paper, these men advised that no one should be hindered from laying their intentions before the women's meeting but that if any intending to marry could not be persuaded in their own minds to propose their intention to the women's meeting, if they were otherwise free from all scandals and other engagements:

> that they..may not be exposed to any manner of temptation as to marry with a priest, or other evil, or incontinency, they be not hindered from accomplishing their marriage among Friends.

---

[63] Both Robert Duncon and John Crook had previously supported John Perrot. They therefore had personal experience of the ill consequences of division.

This paper also advised that women should be free either to meet apart from the men for business or to attend the men's meetings.[64]

It is surprising to see the names of George Whitehead and Charles Harris subscribing the same paper by this date. Perhaps the opposing sides in Hertford had each called upon a supporter from elsewhere to help them to try to resolve the conflict there. Beverly Adams suggests that the affair was 'submitted to the arbitration of three senior Quakers' and that 'Charles Harris proved sympathetic to the separatists'.[65] However, Harris had been a Wilkinson-Story supporter for at least two years by this point so his sympathy for the Hertford Wilkinson-Story faction would have been expected and mainstream Friends would not have regarded him as a 'senior Quaker' or a worthy arbitrator.[66]

George Whitehead's subscription of this paper is particularly interesting as he certainly did not express such a lenient approach towards Wilkinson-Story supporters in his printed pamphlets. It is also worth noting that Thomas Ellwood belonged to the Upperside men's Monthly Meeting which claimed to exercise condescension towards those who conscientiously scrupled laying their marriage intentions before the women's meeting. Like Whitehead, he later wrote a number of pamphlets against Wilkinson-Story supporters. The tone of both men's

---

[64] Hertford Minutes, Vol.1, fo.290.
[65] Beverly Adams, 'The "Durty Spirit" at Hertford: A Falling out of Friends', JEH, 52 (2001), pp.647-674.
[66] William Penn to John Raunce and Charles Harris, 11 September 1676, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.132-134.

pamphlets was forceful and uncompromising. For example, in answer to Raunce's claim that the Wilkinson-Story group sought peace, Ellwood argued:

> true peace cannot be amongst you: for there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God…and ye have wickedly departed from the Lord and made a wicked breach, rent, division and separation from the Church of Christ.[67]

Similarly, Whitehead attacked the Wilkinson-Story supporters as:

> conceited, exalted, puffed up Luciferian spirits, despisers and mockers…apostate informers, treacherous hypocrites, false brethren, and deceitful workers, betraying Judases, devils incarnate…degenerate, without natural affection, dogs that are without, wolves, and raging waves of the sea, that foam out their own shame.[68]

There were probably two reasons why such Friends would react differently in private and in public concerning the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. One reason related to the spirit in which objections were presented. As the above-quoted minute from the Upperside men's meeting indicates, Friends were prepared to exercise leniency towards those whose consciences did not allow them to lay their marriage intentions before the women's meeting, provided that they did not resort to forcefulness or reflection in expressing their discomfiture with women's meetings. Those who disagreed with their objections may nonetheless have had some sympathy with such

---

[67] Thomas Elwood, A Fair Examination of a Foul Paper, London, 1693, p.2.
[68] George Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, London, 1682, [epistle, pp.2-3].

people, as even some leading Friends had found it hard to accept the powers that Fox gave to women's meetings.[69] Therefore, Friends did not want to force the consciences of such people and undoubtedly hoped that they would later come to accept the work of the women's meetings in these matters. If, however, people condemned the women's meeting, attacked the Friends who supported these meetings or refused to accept that others valued the work of these meetings, they would not be shown any leniency. Their wilfulness would be seen to be the fruit of a wrong spirit and they would not be judged to have a genuine conscientious scruple.

The other reason for these different approaches related to whether Friends publicised their objections or not. In the case of Hertford, for instance, Friends appear to have been making private attempts to resolve the contention among them. Whitehead evidently felt that a certain amount of leniency was necessary in order both to promote unity and to prevent the Friends concerned from doing anything that might bring public reproach upon Friends or compromise their religious principles, such as going to an Anglican minister to be married. By contrast, the pamphlets concerning the controversy published by Whitehead, Ellwood and others were written in response to those who had attacked the Quaker leadership publicly in print. By printing, the Wilkinson-Story writers had brought public reproach upon Friends and had also aroused a great deal of animosity against themselves through their personal reflections upon individuals. Concern about their public image and personal

---

[69] See the example of Isaac Penington below.

reputation led Friends to denounce the Wilkinson-Story writers in no uncertain terms. There was neither necessity nor desire to show leniency.

Origins and Instigators

Although William Rogers played a key role in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, it will be argued that John Story and John Wilkinson were the instigators. The controversy originated in Westmorland and initial issues of contention related not to women's business meetings, but to the imposition of the authority of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings and of Fox himself over the consciences of individual Friends.

Braithwaite has pointed out that Wilkinson performed a subordinate role to Story in the controversy.[70] Friends at the time appear to have recognised this. Wilkinson played a lesser part than Story in travelling around the country, spreading and strengthening the controversy but remained in Westmorland much of the time. Both points are evidenced by a letter from Westmorland Friend, Robert Barrow, to William Penn. Barrow refers to 'Story's sect or the schismatical spirit, which is chiefly headed or managed in the north by his yoke-fellow, J.W.'.[71] Wilkinson probably lacked the charisma of other leading separatists. John Burnyeat told Margaret Fell that he heard

---

[70] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.295.
[71] A copy of part of a letter from Robert Barrow to William Penn, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.164-165. The letter is undated but was probably written in late 1677 or early 1678 because it mentions that the separatists have recently started to worship apart from other Friends.

Wilkinson preach 'in a wonderful dead manner' and 'as dead as an old priest'.[72] It would, however, be unwise to underestimate the role of John Wilkinson. He seems to have been the more erudite of the two leaders of the controversy. This is clear from his answers to the queries mentioned above and from his letters, which demonstrate his ability to take Fox to task with the written word. For example, Wilkinson sums up the cause of the division amongst Friends as he sees it:

> It is not in principles of Truth, nor in Christ's doctrine, nor in any practice, which Truth in the members of the heavenly body leadeth into; but about prescriptions from thee, through the blind zeal of the weak to promote thy orders.[73]

Story, by contrast, exhibited little intelligence at times. For example, when he was asked about the meetings held in secrecy during persecution, he repeatedly said that he could not remember.[74] Later, although his association with it was well known, Story even denied having anything to do with the separatist meeting in Westmorland:

> And as to that which they call the separate meeting in Westmorland to manage church affairs, I never was at any of them to this day, neither was I of counsel with them about any business they transacted in those meetings to this day.[75]

---

[72] John Burnyeat to M.F., 10 August 1678, FHL, Gibson MSS, Vol.1, fos.51-52.
[73] John Wilkinson to George Fox, November 1676, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, pp.77-80.
[74] 'Sixteen Queries' delivered to John Story by R.W. and T.L. and his answers thereto, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, pp.9-14.
[75] John Story, Kendal, 24 August 1678, copied in Henry Stout, Richard Thomas and Richard Martin to George Fox, Hertford, October 1678, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.202. He had made a similar denial at a couple of

Perhaps he resorted to lying because he was unable to think of a more adroit response to justify his behaviour.

Perhaps because Rogers published so much of the pro-Wilkinson-Story printed material, Ingle has questioned why the division was named after Wilkinson and Story, claiming that the controversy originated in Bristol, probably with William Rogers. He suggests that Wilkinson and Story's names were attached to the challenge because, 'as rustic provincials, they made easy targets politically' and that because Wilkinson had 'a rather extravagant…style of living', he made a better scapegoat than Rogers, whom Ingle describes as a 'wily, well-established and urbane businessman'.[76] However, there is no evidence that either contemporary Friends or Quaker historians sought scapegoats for the division. Friends blamed those they saw as responsible and Rogers certainly received his fair share of the blame for spreading the controversy once he became involved.

It is clear from the surviving correspondence, both that the controversy received the name 'Wilkinson-Story' because contemporaries did in fact view Wilkinson and Story as the instigators, and that the division originated in Westmorland. For example, Alexander Parker, writing to George Fox in 1675, laments 'the division betwixt the two Johns and Friends of the

---

meetings in Bristol earlier in the year: 'An Account of a Meeting between William Rogers and William Penn' and 'The result of the meeting between J. Story and W. Penn held at T. Gouldney's in Bristol' 12 February 1678, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.168-170.

[76] Ingle, First Among Friends, p.252, n.11.

north'.[77] Numerous similar references could be cited. More to the point, it will be seen below that initial attempts to heal the breach were made with Wilkinson and Story, rather than with Rogers.

Unquestionably, Rogers became one of Wilkinson and Story's chief supporters. It was he who published the vast majority of the Wilkinson-Story pamphlet material and he was one of those responsible for the continuation of the division after their deaths. However, the controversy did not originate with Rogers. In 1673, Rogers was amongst the signatories of the London Yearly Meeting epistle. This not only condemned the spirit of division which was currently arising among Friends but also defended George Fox and the institutions of church government that he had introduced:

> And though a general care be not laid upon every member touching the good order and government in the Church's affairs…yet the Lord hath laid it more upon some in whom he hath opened counsel for that end (and particularly in our dear brother and God's faithful labourer: G.F.) for the help of many, and God hath in his wisdom afforded those helps and governments in the churches which are not to be despised, being in subjection to Christ the one head and lawgiver, answering his witness in all…[78]

---

[77] A.P. to G.F., London, 27 December 1675, FHL, Gibson MSS, Vol.2, fo.10.

[78] Letter dated London, 26 May 1673, signed by 39 male Friends and ordered to be 'communicated to and read in the several Quarterly, Monthly and other meetings of Friends and brethren throughout England and elsewhere', FHL, Portfolio MSS, Vol.23, no.134. John Raunce of Buckinghamshire and Arthur Ismeade or Eastmead of Wiltshire were also among the signatories but later joined the Wilkinson-Story party.

That Rogers was able to put his name to this document shows that he was still far from reaching the position he later espoused concerning Fox and church government.

The evidence also indicates that the division did not begin in Bristol. In asserting that the controversy originated in Bristol, Ingle is referring to the Bristol Two Weeks Meeting's thwarting of some local women's attempt to establish a women's business meeting in 1671, which he describes as 'the first open challenge to the new order'.[79] However, this event was not the beginning of the controversy. It was merely the result of a misunderstanding. At this time, the Bristol women held fortnightly meetings for worship. Some women also seem to have been meeting to deal with the care of the poor.[80] In November 1671, Fox's epistle to the men's meeting, encouraging the establishment of women's business meetings, was mistakenly sent to the women's meeting instead of 'a paper against vanity and excess'. This led a couple of the women to call the women Friends together to wait upon the Lord to see if they would be led to establish a women's monthly business meeting. They did not reach agreement and referred the matter to the men's meeting. The men concluded that the women should forbear holding a Monthly Meeting until such time that they were at unity amongst themselves and with the men concerning such meetings.[81]

---

[79] Ingle, First Among Friends, p.253.
[80] Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.272-273.
[81] Bristol Two Weeks Minutes, pp.54-55, minutes for 27 November and 11 December 1671.

The male Friends appointed to look into the matter included both Rogers who later sided with Wilkinson and Story and Charles Harford who opposed them. Therefore, this really cannot be seen as the beginning of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. Indeed, it could be argued that the Bristol male Friends were not so much resentful of Fox's encouragement of women's business meetings as they were indignant that their own women Friends had had the audacity to act without their consent. Failure to establish a women's business meeting in 1671 cannot be seen as evidence of disaffection in Bristol, just as Westmorland Friend's compliance with Fox's 1671 epistle did not prevent disunity. It should also be noted that, although the controversy caused deep disunity among Bristol Friends, there was no schism in the meetings there.

It was in Westmorland that the division first became so serious that separatist meetings were established. The exact date that contention arose here is unclear. Braithwaite says that Wilkinson did not join the disaffected party until after Story returned from a visit to the South in 1672.[82] However, it is quite possible that before Story's return, there was no disaffected party as such; only disaffected individuals. Story, together with his long-time assistant, Wilkinson, provided the leadership around which a disaffected party was then able to develop.

It was probably towards the end of 1671 that serious contention developed. Women's business meetings were not a

---

[82] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.295.

source of disagreement at this point. On 6 October 1671, Kendal Quarterly Meeting issued a paper inviting women Friends to meet together for business. Wilkinson and a few others who later joined the separation signed this paper.[83] The Kendal Monthly Meeting minutes of 1 December 1671 reveal that their women's meeting was to be established 'in order to the page which was sent from G.F.'.[84] This was the same epistle that had led the Bristol women to consider establishing a business meeting.

Wilkinson and Story later claimed that Wilkinson signed the paper from the Quarterly Meeting 'for unity's sake'.[85] However, he probably saw no harm in women's meetings when he signed that paper. As previously mentioned, Fox's 1671 epistle had not suggested that intentions of marriage should be laid before the women's meeting, but that the women's business should be, 'to visit the fatherless and widows, and to see that all be kept from the spots of the world' and to be 'helps-meet to the men'.[86] This did not appear to suggest any usurpation of male authority so the Kendal Quarterly Meeting encouraged women Friends to assemble:

> to see and consider, that all women, young and old, who do profess the Truth, do walk therein in good order, in

---

[83] A letter from the Quarterly Meeting at Kendal, dated 6 October 1671 and signed by 24 men, reproduced in Accuser, pp.100-102.
[84] Kendal Condemnations, [from the back, fo.8]. (Kendal Monthly and Quarterly Meetings shared two minute books during this period. Minutes relating to intentions of marriage were recorded at the back of the book of condemnations, whilst those relating to collections were recorded in a separate book. Minutes relating to other matters of business were recorded in either book, presumably depending upon which book the scribe happened to have open before him.)
[85] A testimony presented by John Wilkinson and John Story to the meeting at Draw-well, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th Part, p.38.
[86] George Fox to Friends, reproduced in Accuser, pp.98-100.

> modesty and moderation, in chastity, out of the customs of the world, and that nothing be lacking.[87]

Women's meetings became an issue of contention in Westmorland only after they began considering Friends' marriage intentions and once Friends were already in disagreement over other issues.

By contrast, severe persecution at this time, brought resentment over other issues to the fore. From 1670, if not before, the Kendal Monthly and Quarterly Meeting was asking Friends about their payment of tithes.[88] In October 1671, at the same time that women's business meetings were being approved, the Monthly Meeting demanded that all Friends who had either paid tithes or allowed others to pay their tithes for them should attend a special meeting so that Friends might know the truth of the matter.[89] This must have caused a great deal of tension among Friends and it may well be that contention became serious at this point. Friends had long objected to tithe-paying and many had suffered seizure of their goods and even imprisonment for maintaining this anti-tithe principle. Others had evidently found the penalties for non-payment too hard to bear and had undermined Friends' principle by either paying their tithes or finding others to pay them on their behalf. The Quarterly and Monthly Meetings now called these Friends to account for this. It is not known how many, if any, actually

---

[87] A letter from the Quarterly Meeting at Kendal, dated 6 October 1671, reproduced in Accuser, p.101.
[88] Kendal Condemnations, [from the back, fo.2], minutes of 1 August 1670.
[89] Kendal Condemnations, [from the back, fo.8], minutes of 1 December 1671.

admitted to paying tithes and attended the meeting. It must have been clear to them that they would be blamed for paying their tithes. They would either have to risk the penalties of non-payment in the future or be condemned by the meeting. With their financial welfare at stake, it is little wonder that these Friends became resentful of the Monthly and Quarterly Meeting's power to exercise authority over their consciences and, indeed, their worldly possessions.

Similar resentment arose concerning meetings held during times of persecution. To avoid the heavy fines imposed by the Second Conventicle Act of 1670, Preston Patrick Friends ceased meeting in Friends' houses or other buildings and met in woods and other secluded places where informers could not find them. They were frequently admonished for this but refused to acknowledge their fault.[90] In 1674, Kendal Quarterly Meeting decided to speak to them and give judgement, in accordance with a request from Fox, and in 1675 a paper of condemnation was recorded against them.[91] This was a condemnation of the entire Preston Patrick Meeting, of which Story was a leading member. There could have been no clearer demonstration to the Wilkinson-Story party of the ills of the hierarchical system of Quaker business meetings than the condemnation of an entire Particular Meeting by its Quarterly Meeting.

---

[90] Kendal Condemnations, [from the front, fo.7].
[91] Kendal Condemnations, [from the back, fo.18], minutes of 3 [March?] 1674 and [from the front, fo.7], paper of condemnation dated 2 July 1675.

Attempts at Reconciliation

Initial attempts to resolve the controversy, before it developed into separation or spread beyond Westmorland, were thwarted by the heavy-handed tactics of George Fox and Margaret Fell, which confirmed the Wilkinson-Story party's fears that Fox sought to impose his personal authority over Friends. Fell's insistence that the women's meetings be given the power to judge couples' marriage intentions was seen as an example of this imposition.

Westmorland Friends evidently made efforts to ease the tension. On 1 November 1672, the meeting at Kendal decided that papers of condemnation would be done away with.[92] This may well have been an attempt to placate the disaffected, who objected to Friends' papers of self-condemnation being kept for posterity. However, by the end of 1674, perhaps as hopes of avoiding a complete breach diminished, Friends began again to record condemnations of Quaker wrongdoers.[93] On 4 July 1673, the Quarterly Meeting advised that Friends who had differences with each other should not go behind each other's backs to whisper and backbite. Wilkinson's is one of the fourteen names subscribed and there is also a note added which states that George Whitehead approved of this, indicating that this was another attempt to ease the strife among Friends.

---

[92] Kendal Condemnations, [from the back, fo.14].
[93] Kendal Condemnations, [from the front, fo.5v.].

It is possible that Whitehead had travelled to Westmorland specifically to try to resolve the issue but there was little realistic hope of any lasting peace by this point. If any hope had remained at the end of 1672, Margaret Fell soon put paid to it through her personal intervention. At the beginning of 1673, Kendal women's Monthly and Quarterly Meetings began to consider couples' intentions of marriage, although Kendal men's Monthly Meeting does not appear to have insisted upon this practice until February 1675.[94] As previously mentioned, Fox did little to try to compel Friends in England to give this responsibility to the women's meetings prior to the advice of the 1675 Yearly Meeting and the publication of his Encuragement to All the Womens-Meetings in 1676. However, his wife had undoubtedly heard that in 1671 he had persuaded Friends in Barbados to bring their intentions of marriage twice to the women's meeting and twice to the men's.[95] She probably believed that she was furthering Fox's work by trying to introduce the same system amongst Friends in the North of England. It was almost certainly through Fell's influence that the Kendal women's Monthly Meeting became involved in approving marriages.

During her husband's absence in America, Fell also came to the Kendal men's Quarterly Meeting to urge Friends to discuss what they had against the institutions of church government, provoking Wilkinson to question, 'what ground have

---

[94] Kendal Women's Minutes, fo.1, minutes for 3 January 1673; Kendal Condemnations, [from the back, fo.21v.], minutes for 5 February 1675.
[95] John Hull in Barbados to Edward Mann in London, c.1 November 1671, reproduced in Nickalls, Fox's Journal, pp.596-599.

we to practice things imposed upon us by man…that there is no Scripture proof or example of?'[96] There was clearly no love lost between Fell and Story. They drew up papers against each other and Fell had hers read at Kendal Quarterly Meeting on 21 January 1673.[97] Nothing could have made Story and his associates less willing to adopt a more accepting view of the new institutions of church government than the interference of a somewhat overbearing woman who also happened to be married to the man they held responsible for the imposition of those institutions. It confirmed their worst fears about Fox's personal authority and about women's involvement in church government. Fox may have guessed that the dissidents would react in this way as he wrote to his wife, rebuking her for making matters worse through her intervention in Westmorland:

> I desire that thou would do nothing to provoke to strife, but rather in the love and power to lay thee…I desire that thee would rather forbear and be over such things…Leave Westmorland women's meeting to themselves a while and let their spirits cool, and not strive for the power, life will arise over all.[98]

Perhaps he should have listened to his own advice.

In early 1675, Fox attempted to resolve matters personally. He met with Wilkinson and Story at Worcester Gaol,

---

[96] John Pearson et al., Antichristian Treachery Discovered, n.p., n.d., p.29. Although this pamphlet is undated, Wing dates it as 1686.
[97] Pearson et al., Antichristian Treachery Discovered, p.87-89; Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, p.14.
[98] George Fox to Margaret Fell, Adderbury, 4 May 1674, reproduced in Henry J. Cadbury, ed., Narrative Papers of George Fox Unpublished or Uncollected, Richmond, Indiana, 1972, pp.117-118.

where Fox was imprisoned.[99] There was still no physical breach among Westmorland Friends at this point but Wilkinson and Story were beginning to receive support from Friends in other areas of the country. They were supported on this occasion by Thomas and Ann Curtis who were respected Reading Friends and who had previously been keen supporters of Fox. That Wilkinson and Story were beginning to attract Friends of the calibre of Thomas Curtis to their cause should have been a warning to Fox that the disaffection in Westmorland could develop into something very serious.

It is possible that Fox might have had some success with Wilkinson and Story if at this meeting he had adopted a conciliatory tone and listened to their point of view. Maybe he could have allayed their concerns and stopped the controversy before it spread or developed into open schism. However, he told his son-in-law, Thomas Lower, that he:

> cut and hewed them to pieces and kept them at sword's point still; and told them if they continued in that spirit they were in he must bear as great a testimony against them as ever he did against the priests.[100]

Perhaps Fox could not see past Story's attacks on his wife. Perhaps he just had such a high opinion of himself that he believed these disaffected spirits would be bowed by his censure. Whatever the reason for Fox's high-handed approach, it certainly did not help matters. Wilkinson and Story returned to

---

[99] Thomas Lower to Margaret Fell, Swarthmore, 11 February 1675, FHL, Spence MSS, Vol.3, no.165.
[100] Thomas Lower to Margaret Fell, Swarthmore, 11 February 1675, FHL, Spence MSS, Vol.3, no.165.

Westmorland where, within a few months, they began holding separate business meetings.

Separation

Further attempts were made to resolve the separation. Some accommodation was reached at a meeting at Draw-well in 1676. However, it will be seen that the efforts of Fox and other leading Friends to bring the Wilkinson-Story party to humble repentance and to dissuade other Friends from challenging the Quaker leadership actually furthered division. Public humiliation of Wilkinson and Story strengthened them and their supporters in their opposition to the imposed authority of Fox and his associates. Moreover, it furthered the division by publicising it and by arousing sympathy for Wilkinson and Story.

By Braithwaite's estimation, it was probably in April 1675 that the Wilkinson-Story party presented to the Quarterly Meeting the paper objecting to people from other counties and unqualified or young people attending business meetings.[101] This was 'that paper of 87 subscribers which was…the foundation of their separation and separate meeting', so-called because the Wilkinson-Story party established a separate business meeting immediately after presenting this paper to the Quarterly Meeting.[102] Unfortunately, the paper does not appear to survive.

---

[101] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.299.
[102] Kendal Condemnations, [from the front, fo.10], a paper of condemnation signed by 29 Preston Patrick Friends, dated 28 April 1678.

However, the papers of self-condemnation issued by those who later repented of signing it, indicate that they signed other papers too and that this, or the others, attacked the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings of men and women and justified Preston Patrick Friends' actions in meeting secretly during persecution. The earliest paper of self-condemnation relating to the subscription of these papers is that of Miles Bateman, issued on 12 December 1675. By mid-1678, 34 people had issued papers of self-condemnation, including a group paper signed by 29 members of Preston Patrick Meeting on 28 April 1678.[103]

Some of the repentant claimed that they would never have subscribed the Wilkinson-Story papers if they had realised that it would lead to the establishment of a separatist meeting. This is interesting because it shows that, although there were at least 87 Westmorland Friends who agreed with the issues raised by Wilkinson and Story, not all of them were prepared to separate from the main body of Friends on their account. If a similar pattern was repeated in other areas of the country, there must have been many hundreds of Friends who sympathised with Wilkinson and Story's point of view but who were not prepared to openly challenge the Quaker leadership. This was undoubtedly due to the importance of Quaker fellowship and the personal price of separation described above.

It was immediately following the establishment of a separate business meeting in Westmorland that the Yearly Meeting issued the above-mentioned epistle concerning the

---

[103] Kendal Condemnations, [from the front, fos.7-10v.].

issues of contention. On 18 October 1675, the Second Day's Morning Meeting resolved to arrange a special meeting in the north of England to attempt to resolve the 'unhappy difference between several Friends and brethren in the north on the one part and J.W. and J.S. on the other'.[104]

It is not certain whether Rogers had actually joined the division at this time as he was present at this session of the Morning Meeting and therefore must have felt sufficiently at unity with it to participate in its business. The Morning Meeting evidently trusted him enough that he was one of those nominated to choose two Friends from Bristol to attend the meeting to resolve the controversy.[105] In fact, Rogers attended the meeting himself. Bristol opponents of Rogers later claimed that he was an early proselyte of Wilkinson and Story, siding with them when they first came to Bristol to spread their complaints there. These writers say that this was just after Wilkinson and Story had refused Kendal Quarterly Meeting's request that they attend a meeting to try to resolve the contention.[106] It was in July 1675 that Kendal Quarterly Meeting tried for at least the second time to arrange a meeting with Wilkinson and Story.[107] Therefore, if the Bristol Friends remembered correctly, Rogers may have been won over to Wilkinson and Story's point of view just weeks before he attended this Morning Meeting.

---

[104] Morning Meeting Minutes, fo.8.
[105] Morning Meeting Minutes, fo.9.
[106] Richard Snead et al., An Exalted Diotrephes, London, 1681, p.9.
[107] Kendal Minutes, fo.43v.

The meeting with Story and Wilkinson eventually took place at Draw-well in April 1676, despite the misgivings of Alexander Parker who was one of those appointed by the Morning Meeting to attend this meeting. He saw little hope of reconciliation and feared that the meeting would cause a public disturbance.[108] However, with certain provisos, the meeting did agree that a judgement given forth by part of the church could not be a bond upon another part of the church further than their understandings were illuminated thereby.[109] This was probably a greater accommodation than either side had hoped for.

By this time Rogers does appear to have openly supported Wilkinson and Story. However, at this point he may still have hoped to reconcile them to Friends, as he drew up the paper in which they confessed their fault in spreading the division:

> We are sensible, that in the hour of temptation, that hath appeared through us, which hath given an occasion of offence to the Churches of God, unto whom the knowledge of the northern differences hath come…we are sorry that any weakness should appear in us to give occasion for such offence, and…we do from the very bottom of our hearts condemn that spirit…that hath given offence to the Church of God in general, or that oppose the order of the

---

[108] A.P. to G.F., London, 27 December 1675, FHL, Gibson MSS, Vol.2, fo.10.
[109] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.305.

> Gospel, or any faithful Brethren in the practice of those things they believe are their duty.[110]

The tone of this paper indicates that they were at least willing to accept some responsibility for the division. Reconciliation with the main body of Friends might not have been out of the question. However, the events that followed the Draw-well meeting led Rogers to rue the day that he drew up such a conciliatory paper and to claim that its words were no better than 'a rattle to please children'.[111] The paper was not intended as a paper of self-condemnation but it was taken as such by Wilkinson and Story's opponents and distributed to Friends around the country. Presumably, they hoped to discourage further divisions by showing Friends everywhere how Truth had triumphed over division. Instead, the separation received further publicity and the Wilkinson-Story party was incensed by this public humiliation.

Fox, who had not attended the Draw-well meeting, then became involved once more in the controversy. The 1676 Yearly Meeting, heard an epistle from Fox in which he declared:

> Concerning men's and women's meetings, whosoever should oppose them, and the authority of them, I say they oppose the power of God, which is the authority of them, and they are no ministers of the Gospel nor of Christ…[112]

---

[110] The paper issued by John Wilkinson and John Story at the close of the Draw-well meeting, reproduced in Snead et al., An Exalted Diotrephes, p.12.
[111] Snead et al., An Exalted Diotrephes, p.13.
[112] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fo.41, minutes for 17 May 1676.

The meeting then instructed Wilkinson and Story to forbear offering their gift of preaching until they were reconciled with Friends.[113] Fox followed this with a letter to Wilkinson and Story, which began, 'This is the word of the Lord to you', and demanded that they call in all their papers given forth in the separation and cease their separation or 'the Lord God will blast your spirit and work'.[114] By yet again asserting his authority and by judging their spirit, Fox hardened the dissidents' resolve to continue in their separation.

The distribution of Wilkinson and Story's apparent paper of condemnation brought further publicity to the division. It also gave rise to some sympathy for the dissidents' cause, thereby spreading the division. For example, it appears to have been around this time that Raunce and Harris of Buckinghamshire became involved in the controversy. Penn wrote an angry letter to them, upbraiding them for claiming to be unbiased and impartial whilst they were clearly pleading Story and Wilkinson's cause and stirring up trouble in Bristol and Wiltshire. Penn's letter also reveals that there was a great deal of support for Wilkinson and Story in Bristol by this point and that Rogers was now also causing a lot of trouble by spreading 'impious reflections'.[115] Rogers was clearly playing an increasingly active role in spreading the division.

---

[113] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fo.53.
[114] George Fox to John Wilkinson and John Story, 23 October 1676, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, pp.41-42.
[115] William Penn to John Raunce and Charles Harris, 11 September 1676, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.132-134.

Rogers was particularly angered when Robert Barclay published his defence of Quaker church government, The Anarchy of the Ranters, in 1676. Barclay's intention was to answer both those who accused Friends of 'disorder and confusion' and those who accused them of 'tyranny and imposition'.[116] However, as he later explained, Barclay had not written this in response to the Wilkinson-Story Controversy.[117] Nevertheless, Barclay ascribed far greater power to Quaker assemblies than Rogers and the other Wilkinson-Story supporters were prepared to accept and greater than had been agreed upon at Draw-well, at least in Rogers's understanding.[118] Furthermore, Anarchy of the Ranters had been approved by the Morning Meeting, indicating that that meeting agreed with its contents. Rogers therefore wrote an answer to Barclay's book and circulated it in manuscript form.[119] This signalled the start of the antipathy between Rogers and the Morning Meeting.

On 7 June 1677, a meeting was held in order to allow Rogers and Barclay to discuss their differences. Barclay was advised to write an explanatory postscript to his book 'for the sake of all such as may be supposed to have misapprehended any expression therein'. Rogers was upbraided for circulating his manuscript without having first informed either Barclay or the

---

[116] Robert Barclay, The Anarchy of the Ranters, n.p., 1676, [title page].
[117] Robert Barclay to Friends and Brethren, Aberdeen Prison, 6 March 1679, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 3rd part, p.100. This paper was an explanatory postscript which London Friends asked Barclay to circulate.
[118] For a comparison of Rogers and Barclay's standpoints, see Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.340-350.
[119] 'The Innovations and Scripture-Misapplications of R.B. Detected', 'given forth in the year 1676 by William Rogers', reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 3rd part, pp.15-88.

Morning Meeting of his objections, in accordance with 'the rules of brotherly love, Christian fellowship, Gospel-order and the exemplary practice of the Church of Christ'. He was also ordered to call in all copies of his manuscript and to write a letter to Friends in all the areas where the book had been dispersed, clearing Barclay and the Morning Meeting of the aspersions he had cast upon them.[120]

Just a few days later, on 12 June 1677, many of the Friends who had attended the London Yearly Meeting met at Ellis Hookes's chamber and issued a paper condemning Wilkinson, Story, their separate spirit and their separate company. They warned Friends everywhere 'to beware of the said J.S. and J.W. whose way at present is not the way of peace'. The paper was signed by sixty-six men, who did not include Fox or George Whitehead.[121] Although the letter is entered in the Yearly Meeting minute book, it appears to have been issued after the meeting had dispersed. However, copies were sent far and wide in the manner of Yearly Meeting epistles and it was doubtless taken as such by many Friends.

Rogers and others took great exception to this paper because Wilkinson and Story had not been present to defend themselves at the meeting which issued this judgement. Indeed, few of the subscribers had been present at the Draw-well meeting at which Wilkinson and Story had presented their case.

---

[120] Letter signed by Charles Marshall and 36 others at a meeting in London, 7 June 1677, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 3rd part, pp.128-129.
[121] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fos.52-58.

Rogers and a few other Bristol Friends wrote in protest to the subscribers, arguing that most of the sixty-six had passed judgement against Wilkinson and Story without giving them a hearing.[122]

Westmorland Quarterly meeting did believe that the letter came from the Yearly Meeting and, soon after receiving it, the meeting decided that Friends should withdraw their Meetings for Worship from the houses of people involved in the division. Not surprisingly, the Wilkinson-Story party viewed this as a separation from themselves. They also realised that the Quarterly Meeting's actions could be used to good effect in their own propaganda. They spread an anonymous paper around the country claiming that the London paper had provoked the Quarterly Meeting to excommunicate them. The Quarterly Meeting responded by circulating another paper in which they explained that they had not excommunicated anyone, they had not withdrawn their meetings from the houses of Wilkinson-Story supporters on the authority of the London meeting but because they had borne with the separatists for long enough, and that the Wilkinson-Story supporters were still welcome to attend their Meetings for Worship.[123] The damage, however, had been done and the Wilkinson-Story party had been represented as the innocent victims of the London Friends.

---

[122] Letter signed, Thomas Gouldney, William Ford and William Rogers, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, pp.72-84. The letter is dated 20:3:1677 but it was probably issued on 20 July 1677 as it was written after the London paper was read at a meeting in Bristol on 16 July 1677.

[123] The paper is signed by members of the Quarterly Meeting and endorsed on 7 December 1677 by members of Kendal Monthly Meeting, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.166-168.

Jack Dobbs has noted the lack of sensitivity on the part of Friends in their handling of the situation.[124] Indeed, it appears that this lack of sensitivity was largely responsible for the continuance and expansion of the controversy. It is perhaps doubtful that a true reconciliation could have been achieved, bearing in mind the gulf between the positions of the opposing sides: mainstream Friends promoting corporate authority and the dissidents promoting individualism. Nonetheless, the meeting at Draw-well had come close to at least containing the controversy. However, defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory as Fox and other leading Friends sought to humble their challengers and exert their authority.

Methods of Contending

During the late 1670s, the favoured methods of contending changed. Attempts to resolve the controversy through face to face discussion were largely abandoned. Instead, the opposing sides sought to promote their point of view through the written word. They attempted to discredit each other by spreading malicious rumours. They also sought to change their opponents' point of view through personal letters of exhortation. Prior to the publication of William Rogers's Christian-Quaker, mainstream Friends had refrained from printing against the Wilkinson-Story separatists because they feared that exposing Friends' internal divisions to public view would damage the Society's image. However, that same concern for public image

---

[124] Dobbs, 'Authority and the Early Quakers', p.273.

necessitated a printed response to Christian-Quaker. Thus, its publication initiated a lengthy pamphlet war. With the notable exception of Isaac Penington's private letters, both the letters and the printed material produced by the opposing parties were characterised by a bitterness which served rather to harden their opponents in their opposite opinion than to persuade them of their own point of view.

Rumour and Accusation

The spreading of rumours and malicious gossip became a tactic much favoured in the controversy. Fox apparently claimed that whores and rogues, drunkards and swearers attended Story's separate meeting. He was also accused of spreading a rumour that a formalised ceremony was used at a marriage at which Story officiated, after which everyone went to an inn to eat cake and cheese and Story and others doffed their hats and drank toasts to each other.[125] These rumours appear to have originated in Hertford in 1678. Due to the denials on both sides, it is difficult to determine who was really responsible for spreading them.[126] However, it appears quite likely that Fox said these things when he thought he was among allies but Wilkinson-Story supporters heard about it and then made it known that Fox had made these shocking accusations. Wilkinson-

---

[125] Certificates from Henry Sweeting and other Hertford Friends, Hertford, 23 February 1679, probably a transcript by an adversary, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.208.

[126] A denial of responsibility signed, 'G.F.', 5 October 1680, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, nos. 199A and 210; Henry Stout and other Hertford Friends denying that Fox said the things he was accused of, Hertford, October 1678, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.202; G.F. to J.S. regarding Story's denial of responsibility and other matters, Swarthmore 10 December 1678, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.214.

Story supporters spread these rumours around the country, reaching Westmorland, Yorkshire, Reading and Bedfordshire amongst other places.[127] In an attempt to clear himself of the accusation that he had started the rumours, Fox sent a letter to his supporters in Hertford. He enclosed certificates from people in Westmorland saying that they had seen one of Story's supporters doffing his hat and bowing, drinking with a priest and calling someone 'sir'.[128] Exactly how Fox imagined that spreading rumours about one of Story's supporters would prove him innocent of having spread rumours about Story himself is unclear.

Rogers had a different approach to rumour spreading. Rather than sending anonymous papers up and down the country, he preferred to gather accusations against Fox, complete with certificates from witnesses to give his accusations at least the appearance of legitimacy. He would then write to Fox, challenging him to answer his charges. In June 1678, Fox wrote an epistle urging Friends not to make their goods over to their servants to avoid them being despoiled by persecutors.[129] This gave Rogers the excuse he needed to issue a letter charging Fox with self-contradiction and, in particular, with fleeing from persecution and advising Friends on ways to avoid paying tithes.[130] Clearly, Rogers hoped that Fox would agree to have a

---

[127] G.F., 5 October 1680, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, nos. 199A and 210; Thomas Gerish, Bromham, 9 November 1680, saying that he heard the rumours from John Raunce, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.211.
[128] G.F. to Henry Stout and others, Swarthmore, 27 November 1678, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, nos.216-217.
[129] George Fox to Friends, London, June 1678, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 5th part, pp.24-25.
[130] William Rogers, Bristol, 20 July 1678, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 5th part, pp.25-35.

meeting with him so that Rogers could prove his charges in public.[131] No public meeting was agreed to. However, the circulation of Rogers's letters on the subject ensured that Friends were aware of the charges he had made against Fox.

Letters of Exhortation - Isaac Penington

The majority of letters produced during the Wilkinson-Story Controversy were not intended to be spread publicly around the country. Most were intended to be read only by their recipients. Letter-writing was the most efficient method Friends around the country had of informing each other about the progression of the controversy. Letters were also a means of attempting to resolve the contention. A number of Friends wrote to the Wilkinson-Story adherents in an attempt to convince them to give up their separation. However, the tone of most of these letters was not calculated to persuade the separatists to reconsider their position. It was argumentative at best and often confrontational and judgmental. The letters from Wilkinson-Story supporters to their opponents were usually of a similar tenor. The above-mentioned letter of Fox which began, 'This is the word of the Lord to you, John Wilkinson and John Story' is a good example, as is a reply to Fox from Robert Aris, or Ares, arguing:

> there is not amongst any society of professors this day in England, so much strife and division with railing and reviling and envy and back-biting as is amongst those

---

[131] Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 5th part, p.35.

> that profess the Truth; the like I never saw nor knew amongst Friends before thy orders came forth.[132]

The letters exchanged during the controversy clearly demonstrate the height of anger felt on both sides. There was, however, at least one man who was able to write without losing his temper or slipping into personal insults and wild accusations. Isaac Penington's writings are worthy of note for a number of reasons. Penington was in an unusual position. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he had initially supported John Perrot but had later repented of doing so. He still believed in the importance of the Spirit's illumination of the individual conscience. However, he knew from bitter experience the pain of being ostracised by the main body of Friends. Many of the letters he wrote during the Wilkinson-Story Controversy are among the various papers transcribed for posterity by his son, John.[133]

The letters show that Isaac Penington agonised again with his conscience over this controversy. He struggled over whether or not he saw the power of the Lord at work in John Story.[134] He clearly also found the concept of women's business meetings difficult to accept. His experience was probably similar to

---

[132] George Fox to John Wilkinson and John Story, 23 October 1676, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, pp.41-42; Robert Ares to George Fox, Burton Hill, 21 February 1682, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.199.

[133] The papers relating to the Wilkinson-Story Controversy collected by John Penington are transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.132-176. The letters from Isaac Penington are transcribed on fos.141-158.

[134] I.P. to T.C., transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.145-146. This letter is undated but was probably written in 1677 or 1678 as this was the time during which Penington wrote other letters of similar content.

that of many Friends at the time. His natural instincts were against them but because they had apparently been instituted through the guidance of the Spirit, he dared not oppose them and left it to the Lord to guide him:

> When I first heard of women's meetings, I saw nothing of the Lord in it, nay hearkened to the reasonings of them that spake to me against it, and so was not sensible of any service to Truth or benefit to Friends thereby; yet it coming forth in the name of the Lord, I durst not oppose it, because it might possibly be of the Lord for ought I knew…so the Lord guided me out of all thoughts and reasonings of my own or other men's, into that stillness…the power of the Lord broke in upon me, and his life sprang purely in me, the Lord brightly opened the thing to me and showed it me to be of him…[135]

He wrote this to Friends in the area that he was visiting, because he could see that they were grappling with their own consciences over this issue. His ability to empathise with them probably made his advice much more useful to them than directives from Fox or the London Yearly Meeting.

Because of the angry, uncompromising tone of the majority of letters and pamphlets produced during the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, it is easy to forget that Friends were not only angered but also saddened by the division. However, the reality is clear from Isaac Penington's letters. Here was a man

---

[135] 'Concerning Women's Meeting', I.P., Brayls, 10 September 1678, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fo.157. Judging from the letters written by Penington from Radway near Edgehill during the three days before he wrote this letter, he was visiting Warwickshire.

desperate to do whatever he could to restore peace among Friends. Writing to Story, Penington is firm but not angry. Rather, he is concerned for Story's redemption:

> a wrong spirit had entered thee…and thou art sorely inwardly hurt and languishing, and also leavening many with this wrong spirit…O dear John, pure love and desires after thy recovery spring so in me, that I could even lay down my life for it.[136]

During 1677 and 1678 Penington also wrote a number of letters in a similar tone to Wilkinson-Story supporters, particularly those in Reading, Hertford and High Wycombe. He obviously found this work difficult and perhaps feared making matters worse through his efforts, as he often waited for some time after writing these letters before he actually sent them. It is clear that he would only send the letters once he felt at ease in his conscience and, indeed, constrained by the Spirit to send them:

> The enclosed was written while among you, intended to have been left then by me for you but I found not full clearness at that time so to do…At length this morning it lay so weightily upon me, that I began to faint, and was, as I may say, even forced to give up to send it to you.[137]

Unfortunately, the replies Penington received, if any, do not survive. If his letters were received in the spirit in which

---

[136] I.P. to John Story, Amersham-Woodside, 21 September 1676, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fo.141. The beginning of this letter is missing because fos.139-140 have been torn out of the book.

[137] I.P. 'To Reading Friends for cover to the foregoing letter', transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fo.148. The covering note is undated but the letter was written on 28 September 1678.

they were sent, they can have done no harm. However, Penington was just one calm voice among an angry multitude. The main protagonists on both sides of the division lacked Penington's moderate approach and without it, there could be little hope of reconciliation. Ingle has observed that:

> the issues might have been resolved if Fox and his side had made the effort to listen to the dissidents and be more conciliatory.[138]

This is true and, as previously argued, the initial contention might never have developed into schism if Fox and others had made this effort. However, as the years passed, a conciliatory attitude was required on both sides if a resolution was to be effected.

Print - The Christian-Quaker

By the end of the 1670s, the attitudes of the opposing factions had rather hardened than softened. Fox, George Whitehead, Penn and William Gibson attended special meetings with Story, Rogers and others in Bristol in 1678. Leading Friends' hope was to persuade Story to acknowledge his responsibility for the separation and to return to Westmorland to end the division.[139] However, after these meetings, few attempts were made to resolve the contention face to face. By

---

[138] Ingle, First Among Friends, p.263.

[139] An account of these meetings is given in 'An Account of a Meeting between William Rogers and William Penn' and 'The result of the meeting between J. Story and W. Penn held at T. Gouldney's in Bristol' 12 February 1678, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fos.168-170. These were probably Penn's accounts of the meetings as the other leading Friends who were present are hardly mentioned.

this point, Rogers was beginning to take over the mantle of leadership of the Wilkinson-Story party. At the second of the Bristol meetings he obtained permission to speak on Story's behalf due to Story's physical weakness, although Penn and others would only allow him to do this if Story was present.[140]

Whilst Rogers was clearly a proponent of special meetings to debate the issues of contention, he also favoured a different method of contending. He appears to have been seeking the opportunity to print against Fox and other leading Friends for quite some time. This is demonstrated by his attempt to print against Barclay and by the fact that, following these meetings in Bristol, Rogers spread a narrative of the proceedings of that meeting, contrary to the agreement drawn up beforehand. Fox's letter of reprimand for breaking this agreement reveals that Rogers was threatening to print by this point:

> Thou threatens me with printing, thou must not think to fear me with threatening for that will do thee no good when thou hast done it.[141]

By the time of the 1679 London Yearly Meeting, Rogers had prepared a manuscript giving the Wilkinson-Story account of the separation. In May, Rogers, Ford, Ismeade and Maltravers wrote to Fox, Whitehead and Penn, as well as to the Yearly Meeting, demanding that the manuscript should be given a public reading

---

[140] 'The result of the meeting between J. Story and W. Penn held at T. Gouldney's in Bristol' 12 February 1678, transcribed in FHL, John Penington MSS, Vol.4, fo.170.
[141] G.F. to W.R., 14 January 1679, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.222.

prior to printing, either in Wiltshire or Bristol by the end of the month.[142] No agreement to a public reading or discussion was forthcoming so further attempts were made to secure one. Rogers wrote to James Claypoole and others claiming:

> The sins of G. Fox have been notorious…now my concern of conscience is, to cry aloud for justice, and to signify, that I am constrained to detect him for his evil, and errors by a printed record, unless some expedient may be found agreeable to Truth, to satisfy my conscience otherwise.[143]

Raunce also wrote twice to Fox in Summer 1680, informing him that Rogers had drawn up a manuscript detailing how Fox had acted contrary to Truth. He urged Fox to agree to meet with Rogers to clear himself or admit his guilt.[144] Fox apparently refused to grant Rogers a meeting, claiming that 'it would prove but a jangle'.[145] However, William Mead claimed that Fox did agree to meet with Rogers but Rogers refused the meeting because he would not accept Mead's word that Fox would attend.[146] Having gone to the trouble of drawing up his enormous manuscript, Rogers clearly was not going to be denied his excuse to print it. In fact, Rogers's book had almost certainly begun to be printed while he was still purportedly seeking a meeting to prevent its publication.

---

[142] YM Minutes, Vol.1, fos.67-68, minutes of 10 and 11 May 1679; Letter of William Rogers and William Forde, Bristol, incorrectly dated 4 June 1679, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, [preface, pp.17-18].
[143] William Rogers to James Claypoole and others, London, 25 February 1680, reproduced in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, postscript, pp.6-8.
[144] John Raunce to George Fox, Wycombe, 30 May 1680 and J. Raunce to George Fox, Wycombe, 9 June 1680, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, nos. 135-136.
[145] Daniel Smith, Marlborough, 6 July 1680, quoted in Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, postscript, p.22.
[146] Accuser, pp.256-257.

The book that was finally published, The Christian-Quaker Distinguished from the Apostate and Innovator in Five Parts, incorporated much of the manuscript that Rogers had prepared in time for the 1679 Yearly meeting but included other material too. It was published by William Rogers 'on behalf of himself and other Friends in Truth concerned' in late 1680.[147] Its publication brought the Wilkinson-Story Controversy into the public arena.[148] Christian-Quaker also brought an even greater bitterness to the controversy. This was clear from the very title, with its charge of apostasy and innovation; both considered very insulting terms among seventeenth-century Friends. The book was largely a personal attack upon Fox, whom Rogers saw as the instigator of the divisions amongst Friends through the imposition of his form of church government upon them:

> The impartial reader may consider, whether if G.F. had contented himself…with the place of a servant of Christ, that sought not dominion over his brethren's faith, and consciences; nor yet to expect submission to his outward precepts, prescriptions, or orders, further than every Friend to Truth was, or might be, by the Light of Christ

---

[147] It is interesting to note that no printer's name appears on Christian-Quaker. Quaker printer, John Bringhurst, printed it but later disowned it. As a preface to Christopher Taylor's, An Epistle of Caution, Bringhurst printed an admission of his weakness and urged Friends not to read Christian-Quaker: C[hristopher] T[aylor], An Epistle of Caution, London, 1681, [preface].

[148] Whitehead and Elson, An Epistle for True Love, was actually published shortly before Christian-Quaker, leading Rogers to attempt to argue that his opponents had printed first: Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, postscript, p.27. However, as Whitehead pointed out, this could not possibly be true because Rogers's book was so long that its printing began some time before that of An Epistle for True Love: Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, p.146.

> in the conscience, led and guided therein; the differences now amongst Friends, touching which some seem ready to bite and devour others, might never have been.[149]

Rogers made a good point. If Fox had not imposed his authority over the consciences of other Friends through the imposition of the system of church government, controversy might not have arisen. However, the good points that Rogers made were lost among the bitter invective, spurious accusations, pettiness and pedantry which characterised this weighty tome. It must have taken a patient reader to find them.

The publication of Christian-Quaker had a number of consequences. One of these was to initiate a pamphlet war that would be waged until the end of the century. No doubt many Friends had been longing for some time to publish what they thought of the Wilkinson-Story party. They had suppressed this desire due to the ill consequences that would ensue if the details of the division became public knowledge. Now, however, their adversaries had made these details public and it became necessary for Friends to publicly defend themselves and their leader against the charges manifested against them in print. There was no shortage of volunteers for this task. From 1681, the Morning Meeting was inundated with answers to Christian-Quaker, almost all of which were approved for publication.

The most notable among the first responses was The Accuser of our Brethren. The intention of this book was to turn Rogers's accusations of apostasy and innovation upon himself,

---

[149] Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 4th part, pp.5-6.

which the author accomplished with some success by using the points Rogers had made himself in Christian-Quaker. The author also demanded of Wilkinson and Story whether they had supported the printing of Christian-Quaker.[150] The Morning Meeting minutes do not reveal who the author was, although it has been attributed to George Whitehead.[151] The meeting decided that, because Rogers had abused the Morning Meeting in his book, Accuser would be signed by Ellis Hookes, the clerk, and issued on behalf of the meeting.[152] The decision to omit the name of the author or authors was curious. Presumably the Morning Meeting felt that, as a body, it carried greater weight among Friends. However, they seem to have been mistaken. Wiltshire Friend, Adam Gouldney, wrote:

> I wished with my whole heart that Friends' names had been to that book which is called the Accuser of our Brethren. If ancient Friends' names had been to it, as G. Whitehead, Alexander Parker, William Gibson's and William Penn's, he being a popular man, it had been I believe a means to have weighed down this spirit.[153]

Individual Friends who had laboured in the Truth for many years held more sway with Friends than a meeting with which the vast majority of Friends had never had any business. The omission of the author's name also gave Rogers something else to complain about.[154]

---

[150] Accuser, pp.197-198.
[151] There are references in Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, which indicate that Whitehead did write at least some of Accuser and that Rogers believed that he was the author: Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, p.42.
[152] Morning Meeting Minutes, fo.51, minutes for 18 July 1681.
[153] Adam Gouldney to G.F., 1682, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.147.
[154] William Rogers, The Seventh Part of the Christian-Quaker, London, 1682, [short advertisement].

Two other lengthy rebuttals of Christian-Quaker are worthy of note. In An Antidote against the Infection, Ellwood worked methodically through Christian-Quaker, exposing Rogers's errors and perversions of Friends' words and the contradictions and inconsistencies of the Wilkinson-Story party. He answered their charges and laid his own charges against them.[155]

Antichristian Treachery Discovered does not appear to have been published until 1686 but it was written by Wilkinson and Story's northern opponents. As well as attacking Rogers, it gave an account of the development of the controversy in Westmorland from their perspective, in answer to the account provided by Rogers in Christian-Quaker.

In addition to these larger works, a number of smaller ones were published. Some of these were individual Friends' answers to the charges Rogers had made against them in Christian-Quaker, such as Jasper Batt's Truth and Innocency and John Penington's Complaint against William Rogers.[156] The latter was written by John Penington to clear his recently deceased father because Rogers had quoted Isaac Penington's 'The Authority and Government which Christ Excluded out of his Church'.[157] The tract had been written in 1660 when Isaac Penington was still in that mystical spirituality which led him to favour Perrot and, particularly through Rogers's omissions in quoting, it appeared to argue against outward forms of

---

[155] Thomas Ellwood, An Antidote against the Infection of William Rogers's Book, London, 1682.
[156] Jasper Batt, Truth and Innocency Triumphing, London, 1681; John Penington, John Penington's Complaint against William Rogers, London, 1681.
[157] Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 3rd part, pp.88-98.

church government. Christian-Quaker was also answered by Friends who had not been personally abused in the book but nonetheless felt a concern upon them to defend their brethren against Rogers's charges and insults.[158]

As in Rogers's writings, there was a tendency among some of his opponents to slip into personal reflections and angry reviling in their works. However, they did provide a good defence of Fox and the institutions of church government, arguing that it was the Lord who had introduced these institutions for the aid of his church and that Fox had been doing Christ's work in establishing them. As Taylor queried:

> And if God hath made use of G.F. more especially to bring good things from him to his Church, or as his messenger to be faithful in his message, to give in that blessed Gospel Order and holy government of Christ…why should he [Fox] or others, found in such a blessed service, be envied and spoke evil against, and be accounted Apostates and Innovators, and to take too much upon them?[159]

Before all the replies to Christian-Quaker had been printed, Rogers began answering the first ones. His pamphlets filled with increasingly extreme charges as he argued that leading Friends were worse than the Pope and his party.[160] The two sides continued to publish against each other for some

---

[158] Other answers to Christian-Quaker were Snead et al., An Exalted Diotrephes; Richard Richardson, A Few Ingredients against the Venom, London, 1681; T[aylor], An Epistle of Caution; Thomas Lawrence, William Rogers's Christian Quaker…Antichristian, London, 1681.
[159] T[aylor], An Epistle of Caution, pp.6-7.
[160] Rogers, The Seventh Part of the Christian-Quaker, p.6.

time.[161] Considering the volume of pamphlet material produced by or in answer to Rogers, it is not surprising that Ingle overestimates the role of Rogers in the controversy. These pamphlets are so much more visible to the historian than the work that Wilkinson and, particularly, Story had done in initiating and spreading the controversy. Also, with the exception of Wilkinson's, The Memory of that Servant of God, Wilkinson and Story did not participate in the pamphlet warfare. Indeed, they had little opportunity to do so as Story died in 1681 and Wilkinson is believed to have died in about 1683.[162] However, Rogers would have had no cause to write if Story and Wilkinson had not started the controversy. It is also worth noting that Rogers's writing for the Wilkinson-Story cause took place over a period of only five years. Thereafter, it was the Wilkinson-Story supporters of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire who continued the pamphlet war.[163]

---

[161] Rogers replied to T[aylor], An Epistle of Caution, Lawrence, William Rogers's Christian Quaker and John Penington's Complaint in The Sixth Part of the Christian-Quaker. John Penington answered this with Exceptions against Will. Rogers's Cavills, London, 1682. In The Seventh Part of the Christian-Quaker, Rogers answered Accuser and took note of Snead et al., An Exalted Diotrephes. Rogers then wrote The Eighth Part of the Christian-Quaker, n.p., n.d. Taylor answered the sixth and eight parts with C[hristopher] T[aylor], Something in Answer, London, 1682 and Whitehead, Judgment Fixed was written partly in answer to The Seventh Part of the Christian-Quaker. Judgment Fixed was answered by W[illiam] R[ogers], A Scourge for George Whitehead, London, 1683. John Wilkinson wrote, The Memory of that Servant of God, John Story, London, 1683. This was answered by Thomas Camme, The Line of Truth, London, 1684, provoking Rogers to issue the poem, A Second Scourge for George Whitehead, n.p., 1684/5. This was answered by another poem, Thomas Ellwood, Rogero-Mastix, n.p., 1685.

[162] Greaves and Zaller, Biographical Dictionary, Vol.3, pp.325-326. If Wilkinson did die in 1683, the news took some time to reach Wilkinson-Story adherents in Reading. Writing in March 1684, Benjamin Coale referred to, 'that servant of God J.S. deceased, and J.W.', Benjamin Coale and Leonard Key, The Lybeller Carracterizd, n.p., [1684], p.2.

[163] The pamphlets produced by Reading Friends were: Coale and Key, The Lybeller Carracterizd, answered by William Lamboll and John Buy, A Stop to the False Characterizers, [London], 1685, replied to by Leonard Key, Here is a Further Discovery of the Formal Preachers in Reading, n.p., [1685]; Thomas Curtis and Benjamin Coale, 'Reasons why the Meeting-House Doors were Shut', [no longer extant], answered by William Lamboll et al., Something in answer to Thomas Curtis, n.p.,

Public Disrepute - Anti-Quaker Writers

It will be seen that the publication of William Rogers's Christian-Quaker came at a period of political instability and severe persecution of Friends. Although Rogers did not seek to bring further sufferings upon Friends, his work provided ammunition to anti-Quaker writers who had no such qualms about provoking further persecution of Friends.

Another consequence of the publication of Christian-Quaker was that which leading Friends had most feared. As mentioned above, it brought the divisions among Friends into the public arena. The author of Accuser described the consequences:

> His [Rogers's] book is revengeful and scornful, it gratifies the Ranters and Atheists, and tends to make our enemies rejoice, and us a scorn to fools…it tends in many things to expose us, not only to the censure of our professed adversaries, but to the fury of our persecutors, and to bring open persecution upon us, by implicitly, rendering us obnoxious to the outward Government.[164]

[1686], responded to by Leonard Key, A Reply to Part of a Book, n.p., [1686]; Leonard Key, 'Something of a Revival', [c.1692, no longer extant], answered by Thomas Ellwood, Thomas Ellwood's Answer, n.p., n.d.; Benjamin Coal, A Few Things Proposed as Expedients, n.p., [1693], broadside, answered by Thomas Elwood, Deceit Discovered, London, 1693, broadside and George Whitehead et al., The Late Expedients Proposed, n.p., [1693]. Pamphlets produced by Buckinghamshire Friends were: John Raunce, A Memorial for the Present Generation, n.p., [1690], answered by Thomas Ellwood, The Account from Wickham…Examin'd, n.p., 1689[sic]; John Raunce, For G.P. or the Author of…Just Measures, n.p., 1692; John Raunce and Leonard Key, 'Observations and Reflections', [no longer extant], answered by Ellwood, A Fair Examination of a Foul Paper.

[164] Accuser, [introduction, p.9].

In fact, the publication of Christian-Quaker probably could not have happened at a worse time, coming as it did not long after the suspected Meal Tub Plot and in the middle of Parliament's unsuccessful attempts to pass the Exclusion Bill. Charles II's anger at dissenters' involvement in the attempts to exclude his brother, James, from the succession manifested itself in the intensification of the persecution of religious dissenters. In reality, King and Parliament probably cared little about the internal wrangles of a nonconformist group. However, the opinion of local law enforcers and magistrates was of great concern to Friends as they undoubtedly hoped that persecution might be less severe if they were regarded as a godly and peace-loving people. Rogers's charges of popery and apostasy and his publication of Friends' divisions did not present Friends in such an agreeable light.

As the author of Accuser feared, the publication of Rogers's charges against Friends also provided the enemies of Quakerism with ammunition that they could use against Friends. Certain disaffected Friends quickly took advantage of the new material Rogers had provided. For instance, John Pennyman renewed and embellished his old charges:

> O ye blind and ignorant, how can you escape the condemnation of the Just and Righteous One? Who have set up shadows instead of substance, and form instead of power.[165]

---

[165] John Pennyman to George Fox, 27 May 1680, reproduced in John Pennyman, Some of the Letters which were Writ to George Fox and Others, London, 1680, p.6.

Because Rogers had published many of the documents related to the controversy in Christian-Quaker, these individuals took whatever they needed from Rogers and used it in their own works. Jeffery Bullock, for example, published a complete transcript of the 1677 judgement against Wilkinson and Story, complete with the full list of sixty-six subscribers and his own answer thereto.[166] Similarly, Thomas Crisp, published part of Isaac Penington's 'The Authority and Government which Christ Excluded out of his Church', exactly as it had appeared in Christian-Quaker, with all the same omissions.[167] He even admitted that he had merely copied from Rogers rather than seeking a copy of the original.[168]

Thomas Crisp presented himself as a Wilkinson-Story supporter but support for Wilkinson and Story does not appear to have been the main ground of his differences with Friends. He had fallen out with Friends over other issues, having been condemned by Friends for paying tithes, for being married by an Anglican minister and for blaming his wife for admitting that it was wrong to be married by an Anglican minister.[169] He used the Wilkinson-Story Controversy as a cover to enable him to express his feelings against Friends. Similarly, Francis Bugg, claimed to be a Wilkinson-Story supporter, arguing:

---

[166] Bullock, A Testimony Against the 66 Judges. The status of Bullock is unclear. He appears at least initially to have been a genuine supporter of Wilkinson and Story but went further than them in emphasising the spiritual side of Quakerism. According to the 'Dictionary of Quaker Biography', Bullock was disowned by Friends in 1676, for denying the saving power of the physical Christ. Shortly afterwards, Bullock began printing against Friends. In 1686, he repented, published a recantation and was readmitted to Quaker membership, 'Dictionary of Quaker Biography', FHL, MS.
[167] C[risp], The Testimony of Isaac Pennington, pp.3-7.
[168] Penington, John Penington's Complaint, p.8.
[169] Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, pp.288-290.

the two principle reasons that can be alleged against us, are; first, our nonsubmission and nonconformity to the new order of the women, erected by G. Fox, and confirmed by a London Yearly-Meeting. And, secondly, that their way of compelling, and antichristian way of proceeding to bring to, and force a uniformity, is by us slighted and condemned.[170]

This was a good summary of the Wilkinson-Story position. However, this was not the source of Bugg's disaffection with Friends. He had fallen out with them when he had been required to pay towards a fine levied on the Quaker preacher, Samuel Cater, in accordance with the Second Conventicle Act.[171] The Dictionary of National Biography reveals that Bugg had also been suspected of informing against a Quaker meeting. Like Crisp, Bugg was using the Wilkinson-Story Controversy as an excuse to attack Friends. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that he continued to write against Friends well into the eighteenth century, by which time the controversy had petered out.[172] As well as issuing a number of anti-Quaker pamphlets under the auspices of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, both Bugg and Crisp also used the Keithian Controversy as another excuse to write against Friends, as will be seen in the next chapter.

---

[170] Francis Bugg, De Christiana Libertate, London, 1682, 2nd part, p.4.
[171] Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, pp.206-212.
[172] Bugg was the most malicious and prolific of the disaffected Quaker writers. Ingle says of him: 'From 1680 to 1724…[he] needed seventy-eight books to catalogue all his disagreements with Fox and the establishment; his life consisted of little else than spewing anti-Quaker venom', Ingle, First Among Friends, p.259.

Rogers and Bugg referred to each other's works in their own so it can be no surprise that Friends believed that all these disaffected Friends were of the same spirit. One anonymous Friend described their relationship in verse:

> Without spectacles some sow your shame,
> Having made yourselves a spectacle, for team,
> Rogers, Crisp, Pennyman, Bullock and Bugg,
> Dark Devil-driven dungy-gods desperately lug,
> That are tied to the tail of their separate schism,
> Pap-Libertin-Heathen-Juda-Atheism.[173]

The association of the other disaffected Quakers with Rogers's writings was dangerous because some of them cared so little for their former Friends that they were prepared to go further than Rogers in their attacks upon them. Whilst Rogers published at a politically unstable time, his intention was not to bring sufferings upon Friends as he still regarded himself as one. For all his pretences, the same could not be said of Bugg. The intention of his De Christiana Libertate was largely to demonstrate that leading Friends were opposed to any liberty of conscience for their members or for other Christians. Bugg even dedicated the work to Sir Henry North, and claimed to be publishing, 'for the information of the magistracy'.[174]

Whitehead reacted angrily:

> Thou hast presented such a one as Henry North, Knight, and the magistrates with such abominable lies and abuses, as if (like a malicious informer and incendiary) the

---

[173] Undated and anonymous, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.229.
[174] Bugg, De Christiana Libertate, [epistle dedicatory, pp.1-3].

> Devil and thou designed not only the perpetual reproach of the people called Quakers, but an aggravation of their sufferings and persecutions.[175]

A Local Example - Reading

The example of Reading shows that the publication of Christian-Quaker contributed to the division among Friends in some areas. Because of the survival of both the Wilkinson-Story and mainstream minute books, a clear picture emerges of the division in Reading. Many of the elements of the controversy outlined may be found in the example of Reading, including objection both to women's business meetings, the exertion of the authority of the Quaker leadership, the strength of feeling aroused by this controversy and the difficulty of separating from Friends. The division in Reading also illustrates differences between the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies

In addition to publicising the divisions among Friends through the writings of both Friends and their enemies, the publication of William Rogers's Christian-Quaker also became a further source of discord in local areas affected by the controversy. During 1681 and 1682, the Berkshire Quarterly Meeting was deeply divided over Christian-Quaker. The meeting agreed to suppress its distribution but meeting scribe, Benjamin Coale, continued to sell copies. He was therefore forbidden from continuing as scribe for the Quarterly Meeting.

---

[175] Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, pp.257-258.

However, Thomas Curtis and other Wilkinson-Story supporters refused to accept the decision of the Quarterly Meeting, withheld the minute book and threatened separation. Curtis became so angry when William Austell was appointed scribe in Coale's stead that he 'catched hold of the paper under his hand on which he was writing and violently plucked it away'.[176]

Opponents of the Wilkinson-Story faction appealed to the 1682 London Yearly Meeting, which found in their favour. Despite his support for Wilkinson and Story, Curtis had attended Yearly Meetings until 1681, which indicates that objection to corporate authority embodied in the hierarchical system of business meetings was not the primary reason for his support for Wilkinson and Story. However, Curtis and his associates now voiced this objection. They refused to accept the Yearly Meeting's decision or to return the minute book. The conflict continued to worsen and Berkshire Quarterly Meeting finally split in October 1682.[177]

More is known about the division in Berkshire than in many of the other places affected by the Wilkinson-Story Controversy.[178] Reading Monthly Meeting is the only place for which the Wilkinson-Story minutes survive. Fortunately, the minutes of the mainstream Reading Monthly Meeting also survive, providing the historian with accounts of the division from both perspectives. There are a few points concerning the division in

---

[176] Berkshire QM Minutes, pp.31-35.
[177] Berkshire QM Minutes, pp.35-42.
[178] An outline of the separation in Reading is provided by Howard Smith, 'The Wilkinson-Story Controversy in Reading', JFHS, 1 (1903-1904), pp.57-61. This account contains some errors.

Reading which are worthy of note. It appears that more Friends in Reading supported Wilkinson and Story than supported Fox and Friends of the central bodies in London. Curtis's wife, Ann, referred to the Wilkinson-Story party as, 'the body of Friends', and their opponents as, 'the little flock'.[179] Because the Wilkinson-Story group included Thomas Curtis, the most powerful local Friend and owner of the meeting-house, the mainstream Friends were actually forced to separate from the Wilkinson-Story party.

In August 1684, the opponents of Curtis and his associates sat with their backs to them at the Monthly Meeting and took separate minutes.[180] By the time of the following Monthly Meeting, mainstream Friends had established a women's business meeting, although the Wilkinson-Story party had not allowed them to meet where they had planned to. When they arrived at the meeting-house for the next Monthly Meeting, on 31 October 1684, mainstream Friends found themselves locked out. The Wilkinson-Story party were meeting in the lower meeting room where the women Friends would otherwise have met, thus preventing a distinct women's Monthly Meeting. Therefore, the women and the opponents of the Wilkinson-Story party were forced to meet elsewhere.[181] Thereafter, the opposing parties met separately for business. Once again, it was the issue of women's business meetings that had prompted open schism. Friends continued to worship together until September 1685,

---

[179] Reading MM Minutes (mainstream), p.3.
[180] Reading MM Minutes (Wilkinson-Story), p.99.
[181] Reading MM Minutes (mainstream), p.14-15.

when the Wilkinson-Story party decided to lock up the meeting-house, 'seeing it is the house only that keeps us together'.[182]

Perhaps the most interesting point about the division in Reading is that, during the last two or three years that Friends worshipped together, the disunity was so great that mainstream Friends kept their hats on when their opponents prayed or preached.[183] When they kept their hats on, they demonstrated that they were not at unity with the person who was praying or with what they were saying. It indicated that they did not believe that person's words to come from the light within, but from a wrong spirit. That mainstream Friends were prepared to worship with their opponents in a spirit of such disunity, when the Quaker leadership would undoubtedly have condoned their separation from the Wilkinson-Story party, shows how emotionally difficult it was for Friends to abandon the fellowship of their local meeting.

The association with Perrot of the practice of keeping on the hat, made it all the more repugnant to those who were demonstrated against in this way. The Wilkinson-Story supporters were naturally outraged by this behaviour. Robert Aris challenged Fox about it but Fox did not condemn the practice, arguing, 'It is hard for Friends to put off their hats to such a spirit'.[184] The fact that it was mainstream Friends, rather than Wilkinson-Story supporters, who resorted

---

[182] Reading MM Minutes (Wilkinson-Story), p.106, minutes for 24 September 1685.
[183] Reading MM Minutes (Wilkinson-Story), p.84, minutes for 26 May 1682.
[184] G.F. to Robert Aris, 20 June 1683, FHL, A.R.Barclay MSS, no.198.

to this practice, also demonstrates that the Wilkinson-Story Controversy was certainly not a continuation of the Hat Controversy.

It is true that both Perrot's supporters and Wilkinson-Story adherents were defenders of the freedom of the inner light to guide the individual. However, they were opposed to different manifestations of imposition over the freedom of the light. Indeed, the Wilkinson-Story supporters regarded Perrot's practice of keeping his hat on during prayer as an innovation imposed upon Friends, which had been rightly judged and condemned.[185] However, their opponents believed them to be of the same spirit as Perrot. Indeed, Whitehead viewed Rogers as no better than Crisp, Bugg or Pennyman and compared them all unfavourably to Perrot:

> 'tis but only John Perrot's spirit of division risen with some other circumstances and pretences, in a more rough, lofty, contemning, hectoring and huffing party...[186]

Conclusion

It will be seen that there was no resolution of the controversy. This was due both to the disparity between the positions of the opposing sides and to their unwillingness to seek a compromise solution to their differences.

---

[185] Rogers, Christian-Quaker, 1st part, p.9.
[186] Whitehead, Judgment Fixed, p.286.

The minute books of the local meetings affected by the controversy vary considerably in the amount of detail they provide about the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. Some make very little mention of it. The paper drawn up to try to resolve the division in Hertfordshire is hidden away in the middle of the minute book, surrounded on both sides by many blank pages. There are very few additional references to the contention in the Hertfordshire minutes. Presumably the division here did not disrupt the business meetings themselves and that is why the minutes are so quiet about the subject. By contrast, the Berkshire minutes are extremely detailed. However, regardless of the volume of reference to the controversy in the minute books, it is clear from each of them that the controversy was not easily dealt with.

The Hertfordshire paper offered a promising compromise, which made concessions to both sides. It was successful in that no separatist meeting was established in that area. However, in January 1684, there were still problems in Hertford, with some Friends refusing to attend Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. The Quarterly Meeting considered seeking a reconciliation in order to make sure that no separatist meeting would be set up but, 'some persons making some opposition against it, nothing was then concluded'.[187] Evidently, resentment was still so high that some Friends no longer cared whether there was a schism.

A similar attitude was manifested in other areas. On 8 March 1678, Kendal Monthly Meeting decided to draw up a paper

[187] Hertford Minutes, Vol.2, fo.9.

to be signed by Friends of every meeting in Westmorland and to be sent to the separatist meeting:

> wherein their separation is denied, and they in the condition they stand in are discharged from meddling or being concerned in the affairs of the Church of Christ meeting in Kendal.[188]

On 2 October 1682 the Wiltshire Quarterly Meeting appointed a special meeting to treat with the separatists. It is clear that four years after the meeting had split, few members of the Quarterly Meeting felt much inclination to make further attempts at reconciliation. The special meeting held on 30 October concluded that:

> They are not a people worthy to be taken notice of any further as from the Quarterly Meeting: But leave them to the Lord...[189]

Indeed, such was the resentment towards Nathaniel Coleman, the man who had seized the minute books of Wiltshire Quarterly Meeting and Chippenham Monthly Meeting, that one of his opponents went through the register of marriages and burials and obliterated every mention of his name that he could find.[190] In Chippenham, however, Friends continued to hope for reconciliation. From September 1680, they held a special meeting about once a month 'to sit before the Lord' in the hope that he would restore unity.[191] This approach appears to have worked as well as any. After eleven years, Chippenham Friends'

---

[188] Kendal Minutes, fos.53v.-54.
[189] Wiltshire QM Minutes, fos.42-43.
[190] Norman Penney, 'Quakerism in Wiltshire', Wiltshire Notes and Queries, 3 (1899-1901), pp.252-255.
[191] Chippenham MM Minutes, p.25.

patience was rewarded and the separatists began to return to the fold.[192]

In truth, there was little more that Friends could do other than to sit and hope. The meetings held between leading Friends and dissidents during the 1670s had failed to bring about a resolution of the differences. Neither side had managed to convince the other of the veracity of its position through its letters and printed pamphlets. Indeed, by the mid-1680s, many of the Wilkinson-Story party were contentedly continuing their separatist meetings and mainstream Friends were losing interest in attempts to regain them. Disownment was similarly unsuccessful because the dissidents refused to accept the authority of the meetings which disowned them and continued to regard themselves as Friends. Because there were large groups of Wilkinson-Story supporters, rather than just a handful of individuals, disownment did not have such an isolating effect as it otherwise would have done. This made it a less effective tool and was useful only as a means of dictating how Friends should regard the dissidents.

Occasionally the separatists would propose a reconciliation. However, it was clear that they had not changed their opinion of leading Friends, the London central bodies or women's business meetings, so their opponents recognised that their proposals were insincere. In fact, Ellwood was quick to point out that Coale's A Few Things Proposed as Expedients, of 4 June 1693, was written just one day after fellow Reading

---

[192] Chippenham MM Minutes, pp.53-54.

separatist, Leonard Key, wrote another paper which tended to renew contention.[193] London Friends agreed to consider Coale's proposals only if the Wilkinson-Story party dissolved its separate meetings, re-opened the Reading meeting-house, ceased condemning women's meetings and admitted their guilt in causing the division.[194] Evidently, Coale and his associates had no genuine intention of making these concessions and the Reading separatist meeting continued until 1716.[195]

No resolution of the controversy could be achieved unless there was a willingness amongst the contenders to compromise and there was no willingness. However, the points of contention were such that compromise would have been difficult. The central tenet of the Wilkinson-Story position was the belief that no Friend or group of Friends could have the authority to force another Friend to do something to which he was not led by the light in his own conscience. This belief could never be reconciled with a system of business meetings which was designed to introduce uniformity of behaviour amongst Friends. Similarly, if mainstream Friends had accepted the veracity of the Wilkinson-Story position, the authority of the system of business meetings would have been negated. Meetings would have been able to advise no more than that each Friend follow his or her conscience in all matters. The Wilkinson-Story party would have welcomed a return to the individualism of early Quakerism

---

[193] Ellwood, Deceit Discovered, broadside. It is not clear whether Key's paper was printed or not as it does not survive. It was probably similar in content to Leonard Key, 'Something of a Revival'; Coal, A Few Things Proposed as Expedients, broadside.

[194] Whitehead et al., The Late Expedients Proposed, pp.2-3.

[195] Reading MM Minutes (Wilkinson-Story), p.168. The last entry in the minute book is for 19 May 1716.

but leading Friends realised that it would eventually tear the Society of Friends apart as everyone followed their own disparate paths.

Although there was no hope of reconciliation at the end of the seventeen century, a more sensitive approach on the part of the Quaker leadership at an earlier point might have resolved or limited the controversy. Had Fox and other leading Friends been prepared to listen to Wilkinson and Story's concerns, contention might not have escalated to the point of open schism. Clearly, some leading Friends, such as Whitehead, were prepared to allow a little freedom to tender consciences. However, in dealing with separatist leaders, a firm hand was the tried and trusted method. Harsh condemnation of the separatists and their spirit was an effective means of deterring other Friends from joining the separation or voicing their own disaffection with the increasing formalism of Quakerism. However, it was not an effective means of regaining existing separatists to the fold. Instead, it hardened their resolve to oppose the Quaker leadership.

At the end of the Hat Controversy, there had at least been an attempt to regain disaffected members but, even then, the emphasis had been upon judging the spirit of division. The Wilkinson-Story Controversy saw a further hardening of the attitude of leading Friends. If they would not be bowed and submit themselves to the authority of Fox and other Quaker leaders, the separatists would be left to their own devices. Presumably, leading Friends were confident that the controversy

would eventually fizzle out. Their chief concern was for the public image of Quakerism. Each controversial pamphlet must be answered. However, the outward appearance of unity was more important to Quaker interests than actual unity. A resolution of controversy was desirable but not at the cost of compromising the authority of the Quaker leadership.

Consequently, there was no resolution of the controversy. It was only as those Friends who remembered and clung to the individualism of early Quakerism died, that the controversy died too. However, the vast majority of Friends did accept the establishment of the hierarchical system of business meetings and, eventually, the authority of women's business meetings. Thus, the personal authority of George Fox was reinforced and the institutionalisation of Quakerism completed. Even as the Wilkinson-Story Controversy rumbled on in the background, the system of business meetings provided visible unity. The Morning Meeting's control over Friends' publications ensured that Friends at least appeared to be doctrinally sound. Thus, without even having to suffer the imposition of a creed, Friends were deemed to conform to the criteria necessary for inclusion in the 1689 Toleration Act. However, it was from within their own ranks that their doctrinal position would be questioned. Even whilst the Wilkinson-Story Controversy continued in England, a new challenge was developing across the Atlantic.

CHAPTER THREE: THE KEITHIAN CONTROVERSY

Introduction

The Keithian Controversy centred upon George Keith, a highly respected Scottish Friend. Keith was raised in the Church of Scotland and was well educated, graduating with an MA from Aberdeen University in 1658. He became a Quaker in the early 1660s and distinguished himself among Friends through his sufferings, missionary journeys and writings.[1] Having emigrated to East New Jersey as Surveyor-General in 1684/5, Keith moved to Philadelphia in 1689. Shortly thereafter, contention developed between Keith and other Philadelphian Friends. The division quickly spread throughout Pennsylvania and neighbouring colonies and thence to England.

As with the other post-Restoration Quaker controversies, issues relating to authority lay at the heart of the Keithian Controversy. However, whereas the protagonists of the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies had sought to defend the authority of the inner light against the impositions of leading Friends, Keith sought to impose further restraints upon the inner light. On this occasion, it was mainstream Friends who took up the defence of the light.

The authority of the Bible was also central to the

---

[1] A detailed biography of George Keith is provided by Ethyn Williams Kirby, George Keith (1638-1716).

Keithian Controversy. Because of their emphasis upon the immediate revelation of the inner light, Friends were often accused of rejecting the authority of the Scriptures. Whilst the vast majority of Friends did not reject the Bible, they did regard the Holy Spirit as the touchstone by which everything else, including Scripture, should be tried.[2] Because Friends believed the authority of the inner light to exceed that of Scripture, and because their daily lives were directly guided by that light, there might have been a tendency among them to undervalue the Bible. This was particularly likely to be true of the second and third generation Friends of the 1690s who, unlike members of other denominations, had not been brought up being bombarded with biblical passages during worship. Keith feared that through their subjugation of the authority of Scripture to that of the inner light, Friends had internalised the soteriological process to such a point that they no longer considered faith in the physical death and resurrection of Christ to be necessary to salvation.

Keith sought to redress the balance. He did not set out to cause division among Friends, but to reform Quaker doctrine and practice. However, his attempts to do so occasioned such conflict that separate meetings were established both in America and in England and Keith was disowned by Friends on both sides of the Atlantic. He eventually joined the Church of England but continued to attack Friends both in print and face to face for the rest of his life. Keith's attacks upon Friends were very damaging because he exposed genuine weaknesses and doctrinal

---

[2] Nuttall, Holy Spirit, p.28.

inconsistencies among them.

The necessity to respond to Keith's attacks put Friends in a difficult position. Their refusal seriously to consider Keith's proposed reforms or to answer his criticisms showed their unwillingness to question the beliefs and practices which had been introduced or advocated by leading and, by this time, mostly deceased Friends. This intransigence contradicted the Quaker belief in the continuing immediate revelation of the inner light, thereby demonstrating an essential flaw in the Quaker position. However, if Friends had denounced their former doctrinal statements, this would have been seen as an admission that they had received contradictory revelations from the inner light; that the light was inconsistent and erroneous. It was perhaps to avoid dealing with these issues that Friends denied that the controversy was occasioned by theological issues and often directed their attacks upon Keith's character rather than his message.

Post-Toleration Quakerism

It will be seen that the period of the Keithian Controversy was a time of many challenges for Friends both in England and in Pennsylvania, where the controversy originated.

The death of George Fox in January 1691, though it undoubtedly brought great sadness, did not cause much disruption to Friends. Fox's authority continued to be felt even after his

death through the reverence in which he was held by Friends and through the central bodies in London, which were packed with his supporters.

By the time that Keith began to criticise the Society of Friends, Quakerism had achieved a wide level of acceptance within seventeenth-century society. Through the suppression of individualism and through the outward appearance of unity, enforced by the hierarchical system of business meetings, the Society of Friends had attained sufficient respectability to be included within the 1689 Act of Toleration. Toleration had brought certain benefits to Friends, the most significant of which was the freedom to worship.

According to William Braithwaite, the external signs indicated that the Society of Friends 'was rapidly growing in power and in worldly prosperity, reaping the immediate fruits of toleration in abundant measure'.[3] There were certainly many successful and wealthy businessmen among Friends. A combination of their money and the newly acquired freedom to worship was resulting in the building of meeting-houses around the country. However, by analysing Friends' records of births, marriages and deaths, Braithwaite has concluded that there was no numerical increase of Friends in England after the Toleration Act.[4]

The end of the seventeenth century remained a challenging time for Friends. It will be seen below that leading Friends'

---

[3] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.457.
[4] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.459.

response to Keith's challenge showed a continuing concern for their public image and a fear that Friends may yet be excluded from toleration. These fears are not surprising considering the ups and downs of the preceding decades, during which periods of severe persecution had alternated with periods of relative calm, depending upon the political situation of the time. Keith's attacks upon Friends' doctrinal position heightened fears that toleration of Quakerism might not be permanent.

Friends' sufferings for refusal to take oaths and to pay tithes continued after toleration. Toleration also brought problems of its own. Freedom to worship led Friends to seek further freedoms, including respite from the need to take oaths. The Toleration Act allowed Friends to subscribe a declaration of fidelity to the King and Queen instead of swearing their allegiance. However, Friends' testimony against oaths still precluded them from suing for their debts, defending their titles, giving evidence in court, taking up their freedom in corporations, proving wills and so forth. From the early 1690s, leading Friends sought to persuade Parliament to allow them to make an affirmation instead of an oath. This they were granted in 1696. However, disagreement over an acceptable form of affirmation divided the Society thereafter. Furthermore, the division was heightened by political differences among Friends.[5] The Affirmation Controversy, which reached a peak in the 1710s, did not lead to a separation among Friends as the seventeenth-century controversies had. However, the controversy was not

---

[5] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.189. For a description of the Affirmation Controversy, see Braithwaite, Second Period, Chapter 7.

resolved until a 1722 Act of Parliament introduced a form of words which was acceptable to everyone.[6] Thus, even as Friends sought to deal with the challenge of George Keith, they were facing further internal divisions.

In their attempts to establish Quaker schools, Friends faced further frustration. Although there had been a few Quaker schools before toleration, the passing of the Toleration Act led the 1690 London Yearly Meeting to urge Friends to establish schools.[7] However, Friends experienced a number of difficulties in this. There was still some resistance among Friends to the concept of scholarly learning and there was a paucity of people who were willing and able to teach.[8] Moreover, David Wykes has noted a more concerted effort following the Toleration Act to suppress dissent using the penal laws not covered by the terms of the Act. This manifested itself in the increased persecution of unlicensed schoolmasters. School teachers were obliged to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles in order to obtain a licence but many dissenters, including Friends, were not prepared to do this and were therefore prosecuted for teaching without a licence.[9]

Friends of the 1690s were also seeing some disadvantages

---

[6] Hugh Barbour, The Quakers in Puritan England, 1964, paperback edition, [Richmond, Indiana], 1985, p.241.
[7] 1690 London Yearly Meeting Epistle, transcribed in Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Vol.1, London, 1858, pp.47-51.
[8] The difficulties experienced by Lancaster Friends in establishing and maintaining a school in the post-Toleration period are described in Ralph Randles, '"Faithful Friends and Well Qualified": The Early Years of the Friends' School at Lancaster', in Michael Mullett, ed., Early Lancaster Friends, University of Lancaster, Occasional Paper No.5, 1978, pp.33-42.
[9] David L. Wykes, 'Quaker Schoolmasters, Toleration and the Law, 1689-1714', JRH, 21 (1997), pp.178-192.

to the greater interaction with society of the 1670s and 1680s. There was evidently a tendency, particularly within the younger generation, to follow after the fashions of the world. Adrian Davies claims that from the 1690s onwards, the Society adopted a stricter attitude towards members associating with the world.[10] This is certainly reflected in the 1690 London Yearly Meeting epistle. The advice to establish Quaker schools included an instruction that Friends should not be sent:

> to such schools where they are taught the corrupt ways, manners, fashions and language of the world…tending greatly to corrupt and alienate the minds of children into an averseness or opposition against the Truth, and the simplicity of it.[11]

Clearly the establishment of Quaker schools was intended not only to educate Friends' children, but also to prevent them from being drawn into the ways of the world and thence away from Quakerism. The same Yearly Meeting epistle also urged parents to be good examples to children 'in a sober and godly conversation, and plainness of speech' and to refrain from providing their children with the means:

> to furnish them with such things as tend to pride, and to lift them up in vanity, or affect them with the vain fashions of the world.[12]

The backlash against earlier involvement in the world was demonstrated by Friends' adoption of uniformity of dress around

---

[10] Davies, Quakers, p.211.
[11] 1690 London Yearly Meeting Epistle, transcribed in Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Vol.1, pp.47-51.
[12] 1690 London Yearly Meeting Epistle, transcribed in Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Vol.1, pp.47-51.

this time. From the early years of Quakerism, Friends had been distinguished by the plainness of their dress. Indeed, plainness of speech, conduct and dress were signs of 'convincement'; not, Braithwaite explains, 'an outward rule impressed, but an inner life expressed'.[13] However, towards the end of the seventeenth century, dress became not just plain but also uniform. Margaret Fell feared that this uniformity of dress indicated a concentration upon the outward form and a neglect of the inner light. In 1700, she exclaimed in dismay:

> But we must be all in one dress, and one colour. This is a silly, poor Gospel. It is more fit for us to be covered with God's eternal Spirit, and clothed with His eternal light, which leads us, and guides us into righteousness, and to live righteously and justly and holyly in this present evil world.[14]

Uniformity of dress was another means by which Friends sought to maintain their identity and to prevent Friends from being drawn away from the Society by the attractions of the world. However, Fell evidently recognised that this concern was detracting from the spiritual life of the Society. Moreover, Davies argues that these methods did not prevent a decline in Quaker membership.[15] It would be wrong to suggest that the post-toleration numerical and spiritual decline of Quakerism was universal. Clearly there were regional variations.[16] However, a

---

[13] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.498.
[14] Margaret Fox to Friends, 2 [April] 1700, FHL, Portfolio MSS, Vol.25, no.66, cited in Joan Kendall, 'The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress', Costume, 19 (1985), pp.58-74.
[15] Davies, Quakers, p.211.
[16] Davies identifies a numerical decline among Friends in Essex at the end of the seventeenth century: Davies, Quakers, pp.162-163. However,

decline in some areas was another challenge facing Friends during the period of the Keithian Controversy.

There were a number of reasons for a decline in Quakerism in the post-toleration period: a reduction in missionary zeal occasioned by toleration, a diminution of spirituality due to the internal organisation of Quakerism and to the Morning Meeting's control over Friends' writings, an increase in worldliness brought about by increased prosperity and emigration to the New World. The last of these caused problems not only for the reduced number of Friends in England but also for the Friends who emigrated. This was particularly true in Pennsylvania.

As Braithwaite has pointed out, in establishing his colony, William Penn had in mind the 'Holy Experiment' of a community ordered and animated by the Christian spirit.[17] The reality was quite different. The settlement of Pennsylvania was marred by economic rivalry and political factionalism as Friends forgot their Quaker principles and looked to more worldly concerns: a decent share of the economic market, a position of political power and the limitation of the proprietor's privileges and influence. As a contemporary observer described it:

> The Quakers are chronically contentious, 'each praying with his neighbour on first days, and then preying on him

---

Nicholas Morgan argues that there was no decline among Friends in Lancashire at this time: Nicholas Morgan, Lancashire Quakers and the Establishment, 1660-1730, Halifax, 1993, pp.247-253.

[17] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.404.

the other six'.[18]

Pennsylvanian Quakerism was already deeply divided before Keith began to challenge Friends. It will be seen below that those divisions contributed to the development of the controversy. It will also be seen that the demands of government made it necessary for Friends involved in the government of the province to compromise their Quaker principles, a fact which Keith was quick to realise.

Quaker Attitude to the Bible

Because Keith's criticisms of late seventeenth-century Friends were largely based upon his belief that they undervalued the historical Christ through their neglect of the Bible, it would be useful to determine whether or not Friends really did neglect Scripture.

The central experience of Quakerism was a personal, spiritual one. However, there is no doubt that early Friends valued the Bible highly. As Hugh Barbour has pointed out, 'early Friends were steeped in the bible, quoted it unconsciously, and felt that it was the Spirit's characteristic vocabulary'.[19] Indeed, as Geoffrey Nuttall has argued, it was actually early Friends' devotion to the Bible which led them to emulate the Old Testament prophets with their 'signs' and to insist that the same Spirit which was in the prophets and the writers of the

---

[18] John Blackwell to Thomas Hartley, c.August 1689, quoted in Gary B. Nash, Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726, Princeton, New Jersey, 1968, p.122.
[19] Barbour, The Quakers in Puritan England, p.121.

Scriptures was in themselves.[20]

It is clear that leading Friends of the later part of the century also held the Bible in high esteem and were intimately acquainted with its contents. This is most clearly seen in the doctrinal statements issued by Friends. For example, Robert Barclay's Apology described itself as, 'a full explanation and vindication of their [Friends'] principles and doctrines, by many arguments, deduced from Scripture and right reason'.[21] However, these statements needed to be Scripturally based since their purpose was to demonstrate to critics the orthodoxy of Quaker belief. What better way to do this than by showing how well Friends' beliefs agreed with Scripture, the very authority that their critics were frequently accusing them of denying? The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted, issued by leading Friends at the time of the Toleration Act, not only demonstrates that Friends' belief is in accordance with Scripture. It also quotes articles 6, 20 and 21 of the Thirty-Nine Articles to show that nothing that is not contained within Scripture should be enforced or held to be necessary for salvation.[22]

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the attitude of rank and file Friends to the Bible towards the end of the seventeenth century. Bible-reading did not tend to feature

---

[20] Nuttall, Holy Spirit, p.26.
[21] Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, n.p., 1678, [title page]. Barclay, like Keith, attached greater value to reason than most other Friends did.
[22] The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted Against the Unjust Charge, London, 1689, broadside.

during Quaker worship.[23] Therefore, second and third generation Friends, brought up in the Quaker faith, will only have received biblical instruction in their homes. Those who went to school may also have received biblical instruction there. However, even during the 1690s there were few Quaker schools, due to the difficulties explained above.

From the early years of Quakerism, Bible-reading was not the most important element of Friends' private devotions. In her description of the devotional life of early Friends, Beatrice Saxon Snell asserts that the first and principal devotional practice enjoined on Friends was 'retiring to the Lord', 'inward retirement', 'waiting upon God' or 'watching to the Spirit'. As in their corporate worship, Friends were to wait to receive virtue and refreshment from the Lord and to know his will through the Spirit. Friends were also expected to practice self-examination and to welcome whatever 'spiritual exercise' the Lord might lay before them. When reading the Bible, Friends were not to seek to understand a passage further than the Spirit revealed its meaning.[24]

It is clear that the emphasis in Friends' private devotions was spiritual, just as it was in their group worship.

---

[23] Richard Allen has noted the existence of two types of Meeting for Worship among Monmouthshire Friends. In addition to the usual, silent meetings, there were meetings at which Friends would investigate their faith by listening to sermons, reading the Scriptures, praying and discussing the meaning of their religion: Richard C. Allen, 'The Society of Friends in Wales: The Case of Monmouthshire c.1654-1836', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999, p.132. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this second type of meeting was widespread.

[24] Beatrice Saxon Snell, 'The Devotional Life of Early Friends', JFHS, 44 (1952), pp.52-69.

It can only be assumed that most Friends did read the Bible in their homes and were therefore familiar with the life and sufferings of the historical Christ. However, even in their private devotions the inner light was of more immediacy and significance to them than the teachings of Scripture because, as Snell describes it, waiting upon the Lord was 'a full-time job'.[25]

Quaker Confessions of Faith

It will be seen below that Keith met with serious opposition when he urged Friends to adopt a written creed, to which members must subscribe, as a means of enforcing doctrinal soundness. To better understand Friends' resistance to Keith's suggestion, it is necessary first to consider Friends' attitude to creeds.

The earliest Friends saw no need for creedal affirmation. They rejected the recital of any set form of words, as they rejected all forms in worship. The use of a creed as a means of qualifying for membership would have contradicted the early Quaker belief in the freedom of the light to illuminate the individual, as the leadings of the light would have been restricted by the contents of a creed. Indeed, there was no formal membership of the Society of Friends until 1737.[26] Moreover, as Jack Dobbs has pointed out, there was no need for

---

[25] Snell, 'The Devotional Life of Early Friends', JFHS, 44 (1952), pp.52-69.
[26] Even then, formal membership was introduced merely as a by-product of poor relief: Braithwaite, Second Period, p.459.

assent to a creed as a test for association with the fellowship because:

> only those who were prepared to endure the sufferings which their convictions would inevitably bring would seek to ally themselves to such a despised and persecuted group.[27]

Several confessions of Quaker faith were produced during the seventeenth century. However, these were not intended for the use of Friends themselves but for the information of others or as answers to Friends' critics. Edward Burrough's, A Declaration to All the World is an example of the former and Richard Farnsworth's, A Confession and Profession of Faith in God, in which he defended Friends' itinerant ministry, is an example of the latter.[28] These confessions were a means of proving that Friends' beliefs were not heretical and that they accorded with the teachings of Scripture, the authority by which their Protestant opponents judged doctrinal soundness. Many of these confessions were written to answer specific criticisms. Therefore, they did not give a full elucidation of Quaker belief.

The most noteworthy Quaker confession was Robert Barclay's Apology. As the title suggests, this was also written primarily as a defence of Quakerism. Consequently, as Wykes has argued, Barclay avoided areas where Quaker views were considered

---

[27] Dobbs, 'Authority and the Early Quakers', p.xi.
[28] Edward Burrough, A Declaration to All the World of Our Faith, London, 1657; R[ichard] Farnsworth, A Confession and Profession of Faith, London, 1658.

heretical and, where more than one doctrinal position existed among Friends, stressed the orthodox interpretation.[29] The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted, of 1689, is shrewdly written. It clearly states Friends' belief in the essential principles of Christianity, such as the death and Resurrection of Christ, but it does not go into detail. Thus, it avoids mentioning those Quaker principles which would arouse criticism, such as Friends' belief in perfectionism. It also leaves room for a spiritual interpretation and for individual differences of interpretation.[30]

Even Friends' catechisms did not seek to force Friends' consciences concerning the intricacies of belief. Ambrose Rigge's Scripture-Catechism for Children basically charts the historical events of the Bible and cites the passages of Scripture which justify Friends' belief in the inner light. In fact, this catechism somewhat negates the need to actually read the Bible because it lays down everything that a Quaker child would need to know about Scripture: an historical account of the lives of the Old Testament prophets, the life of Christ and an explanation of the work of the Spirit. However, it does not seek to determine specifics such as the nature of the ascended body of Christ about which Keith would later challenge Friends.[31]

Dobbs has claimed that by the end of the seventeenth century:

---

[29] Wykes, 'Friends, Parliament and the Toleration Act', JEH, 45 (1994), pp.42-63.
[30] The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted Against the Unjust Charge, broadside.
[31] Ambros Rigge, A Scripture-Catechism for Children, n.p., 1672.

> the experience, belief and behaviour of Friends were recognised as having validity only if they accorded with biblical precepts, the decisions of the corporate body and formulated beliefs with creedal affirmations.[32]

The increasing subjection of the Spirit in the individual to the Spirit's guidance of the group, and Friends' belief that there was no contradiction between the teachings of the Spirit and the Bible, were noted in the first chapter. However, there is no evidence that the Society expected its members to make creedal affirmations. Although, through the scrutiny of Friends' publications, leading Friends had taken action to limit expressions of enthusiasm, there was no attempt to limit Friends to a very specific set of beliefs. Unity in the basics was all that was required. There was no attempt to impose total uniformity of belief. To force Friends' consciences concerning the intricacies of doctrine would have opposed Friends' fundamental belief in the guidance of the inner light.

It does appear that many Friends purchased copies of Barclay's Apology for their personal use. For example, on 5 December 1699, Friends of Huntingdonshire Quarterly Meeting decided to take twenty-five copies of the forthcoming reprint of the Apology.[33] Because Barclay had avoided mention of the less orthodox elements of Quaker faith, some of those Friends' who read Apology might have moved towards a more orthodox position. However, Friends were not forced to read Barclay's Apology or

---

[32] Dobbs, 'Authority and the Early Quakers', p.344.
[33] Huntingdonshire QM Minutes, Vol.1, [from the back fo.2]. Robert Bridgman, a supporter of Keith, was not among those Friends who agreed to take a copy or copies.

any other Quaker confession and they were certainly not required to subscribe to a creed. From 1738, London Yearly Meeting began to issue collections of its advice on matters of practice and discipline and from 1783, these 'Books of Extracts' were printed. However, it was not until 1834, at the time of the Hicksite and 'Beacon' controversies, that doctrinal statements by Fox and others were included in them.[34] Even this was not a requirement for creedal affirmation.

The Historiography of the Keithian Controversy

The Keithian Controversy has occasioned some debate among historians, who have largely failed to agree about its causes. Marjorie Nicolson has argued that Keith's apostasy from Friends was the result of the influence upon him of the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, and the Kabbalist scholar, Francis Mercury Van Helmont. This, she believes, is demonstrated by discussions between Keith and Van Helmont concerning the transmigration of souls and the nature of the ascended Christ and also by Keith's insistence, like More's, that Friends in their teaching and preaching of the inward Christ were neglecting the outward Christ. Indeed, Nicolson even goes so far as to hypothesise that the apostasy of Van Helmont and of Keith were part of one general movement.[35]

It is certainly true that Keith was associated with both

---

[34] Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.377-378.
[35] Marjorie Nicolson, 'George Keith and the Cambridge Platonists', The Philosophical Review, 39 (1930), pp.36-55.

More and Van Helmont, as were Fox, Barclay, Isaac Penington and others who visited Anne, Viscountess Conway at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire during the 1670s. More and Van Helmont may indeed have influenced Keith's thinking and he theirs. However, it is wrong to view Keith's separation from Friends merely as the product of the influence of these two men. The nature of the resurrected and ascended Christ was one of the issues of contention between Keith and Pennsylvanian Friends. Judging from the account of one of Keith's Pennsylvanian opponents, Caleb Pusey, Keith's possible association with the belief in the transmigration or revolutions of souls also aroused hostility.[36] However, the main doctrinal point of contention between Keith and his opponents concerned the necessity to salvation of belief in the outward sufferings and death of Christ.[37] More was certainly not the first person to argue that Friends undervalued the outward Christ through their emphasis upon the inward and their neglect of Scripture. Friends' opponents had been accusing them of this since the early days of Quakerism.

There is no evidence to support Nicolson's belief that Keith and Van Helmont's defections from Friends were part of the same movement. Whilst the two men shared a tendency towards philosophical thinking, they followed considerably different paths. Keith abandoned the Society of Friends only after lengthy consideration and then embraced the formality of the Church of England. By contrast, Van Helmont founded a group of Seekers, which is of little surprise since he appears to have been a

---

[36] Caleb Pusey, A Modest Account from Pennsylvania, London, 1696, p.24.
[37] Pusey, A Modest Account from Pennsylvania, p.5.

habitual seeker in matters of religion. Above all, in asserting that the influence of More and Van Helmont explains why Keith left Friends and joined the Church of England, Nicolson fails to take note of the many other factors which affected Keith's decisions and the development of the controversy.

Other historians have also neglected the wider picture in formulating their theories concerning the Keithian Controversy. Stephen Trowell has argued that Keith's split from Friends was a reaction against post-Restoration developments in Quaker theology: the tendency of certain Friends to view the inner light as something very similar to natural reason and to internalise the Second Coming of Christ. Trowell argues that, following the frustration of Friends' millennial expectations after the Restoration, such Friends as George Whitehead and William Penn began to assert that the Second Coming had already taken place within the hearts of Friends. Thus, the millenarianism of the interregnum was not disappointed but redirected. He claims that Keith expected a physical Second Coming and believed that the internalisation of the Millennium was an innovation. Also, Keith and Barclay saw no similarity between the inner light and natural reason. Trowell claims that Keith's disappointment when no Second Coming as a mass conversion to Quakerism occurred, coupled with dispute over the nature of the inner light, led him to abandon belief in an internal millennium. He turned instead to the external Christ, the evidence of Scripture and to the Church of England.[38]

---

[38] Trowell, 'George Keith: Post-Restoration Quaker Theology and the Experience of Defeat', BJR, 76 (1994), pp.119-137.

Trowell correctly identifies different emphases between the theologies of Keith and Barclay and Whitehead and Penn. However, there was no great contention between them before the outbreak of the Keithian Controversy. In 1678, Keith had been called into question by some London Friends for his emphasis upon the outward Christ and his physical Resurrection. It was Penn and Whitehead who defended Keith.[39] Although they favoured an internal interpretation, they would not exclude Keith for his external interpretation. Such was the unconfined nature of Quakerism that both opinions could be accommodated. Contention arose when Keith was not prepared to exercise the same tolerance of Friends whose emphasis differed from his own.

It would also be wrong to see the issue of an internal Second Coming as the sole cause of Keith's separation from Friends, let alone his entering the Church of England. As Trowell admits, Keith did not become a Quaker until shortly after the Restoration. There was some eschatological expectation among Friends at this time but it was not at its height and it gradually diminished during Keith's first years as a Friend. During the 1660s and 1670s, Keith appears to have been at ease with Friends' belief in an internal Second Coming. In his later anti-Quaker works, Keith frequently cites passages from Friends' works in which they had asserted this belief. Perhaps most frequently cited is George Whitehead writing in 1671:

> Dost thou look for Christ, as the Son of Mary, to appear outwardly, in a bodily existence, to save thee…if thou

---

[39] Keith, Exact Narrative, pp.38-39.

> dost, thou mayst look until thy eyes drop out, before thou wilt see such an appearance of him.[40]

However, when Whitehead wrote this, Keith evidently felt sufficiently at unity with it to write an additional postscript to the book; an action he later felt obliged to excuse.[41] In this postscript, Keith asserts that none could ever be saved without the light and that the light extends to both Jews and gentiles to make them capable of life and salvation.[42] These are tenets that he later recanted. Keith was still in unity with Whitehead's theology a decade after the Restoration but in the 1690s he was attacking it as gross error. This indicates that it was not developments in post-Restoration Quaker theology that provoked Keith to separate from Friends but developments in Keith's own theology.

Other historians have tended to view the Keithian Controversy as the result of either theological or other factors, rather than as a combination of elements. Edward Cody has stressed the theological causes. He successfully demonstrates the irony of Quaker emigration to Pennsylvania, noting that Friends emigrated because of their desire for liberty of conscience but they were unable to extend this liberty to other Christian groups or, indeed, to each other. The conflicting demands of Christian charity and religious purity were not easily recognised. This paradox was common to many nonconformist groups. Cody argues that Keith and his opponents

---

[40] G[eorge] Whitehead, The Nature of Christianity, n.p., 1671, p.29.
[41] Whitehead, The Nature of Christianity, pp.60-69; Keith, Exact Narrative, p.17.
[42] Whitehead, The Nature of Christianity, p.68.

fought because they viewed each other as heretics and that Keith and his supporters separated from other Pennsylvanian Friends because their godly zeal had moved them to a holy impatience with the gross ignorance and unbelief of their fellow Quakers.[43] Whilst Cody makes a good point, this is an over-simplification of the causes of the separation. He makes no mention of the economic or political factors which motivated Keith's supporters and opponents.

By contrast, Gary Nash neglects the theological elements of the controversy because he is concerned with the political development of Pennsylvania. He does not deny that issues of doctrine were at the heart of the controversy but it is not his purpose to investigate these elements. Nash argues that support for Keith was determined not by intellectual or religious factors but by economic and political motives.[44] He makes a convincing case through careful analysis of the political affiliations and the economic and social status of the two sides. This reveals that Keith was opposed by the wealthy Quaker merchants who exercised political power at the time of the outbreak of the controversy and who sought to limit the powers of the Governor, William Penn. Their political opponents and the lesser merchants, shopkeepers and artisans supported Keith.[45]

Jon Butler disagrees with Nash's emphasis upon economic and political factors and with Ethyn Williams Kirby who stresses

---

[43] Edward Cody, 'The Price of Perfection: The Irony of George Keith', Pennsylvania History, 39 (1972), pp.1-19.
[44] Nash, Quakers and Politics, p.154.
[45] Nash, Quakers and Politics, pp.155-160.

the importance of Keith's intellectual, philosophical and speculative nature. Without offering any convincing evidence to overturn Nash and Kirby's theories, Butler argues that the central issue was ministerial authority. Basing his argument largely upon the document, 'Gospel Order Improved', he asserts that Keith aroused the hostility of leading Pennsylvanian Friends by attempting to undermine their ministerial authority. Butler argues that Keith was trying to circumvent the system of Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, in which these Friends exercised authority, and to introduce religious egalitarianism.[46] However, it should be remembered that Keith was a leading Friend himself. It is therefore unlikely that he sought to attack the concept of ministerial authority, although he was fully prepared to question the authority of any leading Friend whom he believed to be morally and spiritually unfit for that responsibility. It will be argued below that in his paper, 'Gospel Order Improved', Keith sought to make the Society of Friends more exclusive and hierarchical rather than egalitarian. It will also be argued that leading Friends resented Keith's attacks upon their political authority at least as much as his attacks upon their ministerial authority.

One historian who appears to have considered the various elements of the Keithian Controversy in Pennsylvania is Jerry Frost. In the introduction to his collection of documents relating to the Keithian Controversy in Pennsylvania, Frost rightly asserts that:

---

[46] Jon Butler, '"Gospel Order Improved": The Keithian Schism and the Exercise of Quaker Ministerial Authority in Pennsylvania', William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 31 (1974), pp.431-452.

> Politics and economics eventually influenced the alignments in the Keithian dispute but theological disagreements were the immediate cause of the Quaker schism.[47]

Frost demonstrates a balanced approach to the controversy as he recognises the involvement of theological and political elements in the controversy. He also takes note of Keith's above-mentioned association with Van Helmont and other philosophers. However, Frost refuses to accept the extent of the theological differences. He argues that Keith and other Friends did not differ on the relationship of Jesus and the light within and claims that they mainly disagreed about the resurrection of the dead and the nature of the resurrected and ascended Christ. However, it will be argued below that the main point of doctrinal contention did concern the relationship between the physical Christ and the inner light.

At the outset of the controversy, theological positions may not have been seriously divergent. Most Friends did not reject the historical Christ and Keith, at this point, did not reject the inner light. However, positions were perceived as being divergent and this led to division. The theological basis of Keith's attacks upon Friends also broadened as the controversy progressed. Frost does not recognise this because his interest is confined to the controversy in Pennsylvania. Most of the above-mentioned historians have confined their study of the Keithian Controversy to one geographical arena, rather than considering events in both America and England. The

---

[47] Frost, Keithian Controversy, pp.i-ii.

exception is Keith's biographer, Kirby. Having investigated all the elements, she argues that it was the development of Keith's theology which led him to question and to separate from Friends. She concludes that if Keith had ceased pondering over theological questions when he became a Quaker, he would have ended his life as a Quaker leader.[48] This is true to a large extent. Keith certainly did have a tendency to think very deeply about theological and other questions.[49] If he had not scrutinised Friends' theology, he probably would not have initiated the controversy. However, it would be wrong to view this as the only reason for Keith's break with Friends. His arrogant, self-righteous and ambitious nature was also central to the controversy. Kirby's detailed narrative negates the need to give a very detailed description here of the events of the controversy.

The Outbreak of Controversy in Pennsylvania

It will be demonstrated that controversy arose concerning perceived doctrinal differences relating to the authority of the inner light. The personalities and political agendas of the protagonists also played an important role in the early years of the controversy.[50]

---

[48] Kirby, George Keith, p.157.

[49] A good example of Keith's tendency to ponder theological questions is provided by his theories concerning the dates of the millennium and the end of the world: George Keith, A Chronological Account of the several Ages of the World. This was published with George Keith, Truth Advanced, n.p., 1694.

[50] The Keithian account of the origins of the division was published chiefly in George Keith and Thomas Budd, The Plea of the Innocent, [Philadelphia, 1692] and George Keith et al., Some Reasons and Causes of the Late Separation, [Philadelphia, 1692]. These were reprinted as,

'Gospel Order and Discipline'

It will be seen that Keith believed that Friends were neglecting the Bible and this was leading them to undervalue the historical Christ. He sought to ensure sound doctrine among Friends by proposing stricter conditions of association. However, his suggestions were not welcomed because they opposed Friend's belief in the freedom of the inner light. Friends' failure to adopt his suggestions, led Keith to question their doctrinal soundness.

Keith's dissatisfaction with Friends in Pennsylvania and its neighbouring provinces stemmed from his concern about their preaching and their attitude towards Scripture. In May 1688, Keith wrote to Fox and George Whitehead concerning the state of Quakerism in East New Jersey:

> My great work and care hath been chiefly and mainly to declare and hold forth the alone foundation, than which none other is to be laid, even the Lord Jesus Christ…as he was with the Father before all time; and as the Word was made flesh, and came in flesh, even God manifest in flesh…

He further explained:

> It hath been much in my heart from the Lord to recommend unto Friends the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and especially Friends' children and young people, for I have

---

respectively, An Account of the Great Divisions, London, 1692 and A Farther Account of the Great Divisions, London, 1693. The account of Keith's opponents was provided in Samuel Jennings, The State of the Case, London, 1694.

> found a great want and defect in many, that they are but too little acquainted and known in the words of Holy Scripture...[51]

Evidently, Keith was similarly dissatisfied with the state of Quakerism in Pennsylvania. Only a year after his arrival in Philadelphia, Keith presented a paper of proposed reforms to the 'Meeting of Ministers'.[52] This was the document variously referred to as 'Gospel Order Improved' and 'Gospel Order and Discipline'.[53] In this paper, Keith urged that all Friends should make a confession of their faith. Men and women, including the children of Friends should be required to make this confession, give a public testimony concerning their convincement and answer questions about their doctrine before being admitted as members of the Society of Friends. This was common practice among other Protestant groups but would have been an innovation among Friends. He also declared that all Friends should be diligent in attending Monthly Meetings, elders and deacons should be appointed and Friends should:

> give some proof of their sound knowledge and experience

---

[51] George Keith to George Fox and George Whitehead, East New Jersey, 22 May 1688, reproduced in George Whitehead, The Power of Christ Vindicated, London, 1708, pp.225-232.

[52] Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes, minutes for 1 March 1690.

[53] A copy of the manuscript, 'Gospel Order and Discipline', survives and is transcribed in JFHS, 10 (1913), pp.70-76. The manuscript is endorsed in a second and presumably hostile hand, 'Articles of George Keith for his proselytes to sign before they receive admittance into his church fellowship'. This endorsement has led some historians, including Frost, to assert that the document could not have been written before the separation in Summer 1692. However, it is possible that the manuscript was written earlier and was endorsed by one of Keith's opponents at some point after the Summer of 1692. Butler has pointed out that the viciousness which characterised documents produced after the beginning of the schism is absent from 'Gospel Order and Discipline'. This indicates that it was the same document that Keith presented to the Meeting of Ministers in March 1690, referred to in the minutes as, 'Gospel Order Improved'.

> and spiritual ability..before they presume that liberty to preach and pray in open assembly.[54]

Keith's paper should not be seen as the attack upon ministerial authority that Butler asserts it to be. The appointment of elders and deacons would have placed greater power in the hands of those few Friends appointed but it would not have signalled a usurpation of the authority of leading Friends by rank and file members. These positions would probably have been filled by leading Friends. Keith's recommendation that all Friends should attend Monthly Meetings was simply an exhortation to greater diligence. There do not appear to have been any clear rules about attendance at Monthly Meetings during the 1690s but these meetings seem to have been open to those who felt a concern upon them to attend.[55] The Quarterly and Yearly Meetings had more exclusive membership. In Pennsylvania, the Meeting of Ministers performed the function of a Quarterly Meeting. Keith made no attempt in his paper to circumvent the authority of these meetings. He merely stated that those appointed to attend them would be better able to represent their Monthly Meetings if more Friends attended Monthly Meetings.

The aim of 'Gospel Order and Discipline' appears to have been two-fold. Firstly, Keith wanted Friends to be able to exercise greater control over the doctrinal position of their

---

[54] 'Gospel Order and Discipline', transcribed in JFHS, 10 (1913), pp.70-76.

[55] There is evidence that towards the end of the seventeenth century, attendance at Monthly Meetings in some parts of England was increasingly limited to Friends who were nominated to attend them. This was the case in York: Scott, Quakerism in York, p.13.

members. His demands that Friends make a confession of faith, that prospective members answer questions about doctrine and that Friends prove their knowledge and spiritual ability before preaching or praying in public were all means of guarding against doctrinal errors. As early as 1690, Keith evidently harboured serious doubts about the doctrinal soundness of Pennsylvanian Friends. Keith's second aim was to make Quakerism more exclusive. His suggestions tended towards a concept of formal membership. He observed that people were joining in Friends' outward profession for reasons other than convincement. Because Friends held most of the positions of political power in Pennsylvania and controlled most of the province's industry, people were presumably joining Friends' worship in the hope of gaining political or economic advantage. Keith's calls for greater separation from the world show that he had noticed the political sphere impinging upon and corrupting the religious sphere.

'Gospel Order and Discipline' is significant because Friends' reaction to it determined the route which events would follow. Had they accepted Keith's suggestions, Keith might have been satisfied and returned to England content that he had left Pennsylvanian Quakerism in a healthier state than that in which he had found it.[56] However, Keith's recommendations were too extreme to be acceptable to Pennsylvanian Friends. To set down such strict conditions of Quaker association and participation in Quaker worship flew in the face of the essence of Quakerism,

---

[56] By May 1690, Keith was already preparing to return to England and had begun to sell his land in New Jersey: Kirby, George Keith, p.54-55.

in which the belief in the power of the light to illuminate the individual remained paramount. The introduction of the system of Quaker business meetings was one thing, but to force Friends to accept a doctrinally specific creed and to limit participation in worship to those with proven spiritual qualifications was going too far. It went against Friends' belief that the inner light had the power to illuminate whomever it chose.

In practice, less confident Friends were often wary of speaking in Quaker Meetings for Worship. However, if they felt inspired to speak, they were encouraged to do so. As Fox instructed:

> Such as are tender, if they should be moved to bubble forth a few words, and speak in the Seed and the Lamb's power, suffer and bear that.[57]

Friends would speak privately to anyone who went 'beyond their measure' in their preaching.[58] They would even take firm action if a Friend's speaking was persistently offensive, as in the case of Susan Featherstone of Hertford who showed herself to be 'a troublesome, malicious and vexatious woman and one that ought by some convenient method to be put to silence'.[59] However, on the whole, it was only Friends whose moral character was questionable who were not permitted to speak during Friends' worship. Indeed, as the case of one Jeremiah Crisp of Ramsey shows, Friends who were guilty of moral transgression were not considered spiritually 'qualified' to speak until they had

---

[57] Nickalls, Fox's Journal, p.282.
[58] Nickalls, Fox's Journal, p.282.
[59] Hertford Minutes, Vol.2, fo.168, minutes for 3 November 1701.

reached a state of repentance.[60]

It is evident that leading Friends were unsure how to react to Keith's proposed reforms. Perhaps they were wary of summarily dismissing the suggestions of a Friend of such standing. The March 1690 Meeting of Ministers deferred consideration of the paper. It was considered at the Yearly Meeting in 1690 but Friends, 'not seeing the present service thereof', deferred its consideration for a further twelve months.[61] Perhaps leading Friends hoped that if they postponed consideration of the matter for long enough, Keith would return to England, as he planned to do, and the matter would be forgotten.

If this was their hope, Friends were disappointed. Keith delayed his return to England. Such was his self-confidence and, indeed, arrogance that Keith was unable to comprehend why leading Pennsylvanian Friends were unwilling to accept his proposed reforms. Keith evidently believed that leading Friends' failure to adopt his suggestions indicated that they had something to hide; that they were willing to tolerate erroneous doctrines among Friends or were guilty of such errors themselves. Following the rejection of his proposals, Keith therefore became increasingly concerned to examine the doctrinal position of Pennsylvanian Friends. As his opponents noted:

> From this time he grew more industrious to gather up what he could against Friends and craftily to examine the faith

---

[60] Huntingdon MM Minutes, minutes for 6 August 1700.
[61] Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes, minutes for 1 March, 9 June and 6 September 1690.

> of some, and if through weakness anything had slipped from them, he would not fail to improve it to our reproach in public meetings.[62]

Keith also became increasingly concerned to preach what he viewed as sound doctrine, emphasising the physical death and Resurrection of the historical Christ as well as the inward Christ. Keith had claimed that he believed it was safer to preach in Scriptural terms.[63] However, in preaching about the inward and outward Christ, Keith used unfamiliar and non-Scriptural terms; a fact later noted by the 1694 London Yearly Meeting.[64] Consequently, by the time of the 1691 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, William Stockdale had accused Keith of dividing Christ by preaching two Christs. Keith demanded that the Yearly Meeting judge between Stockdale and himself. According to Keith's account, thirty or forty Quaker ministers deliberated for six days but failed to determine whether to preach the inward and the outward Christ was to preach one Christ or two.[65] Yearly Meeting's inability to decide the matter demonstrates the difficulty Friends experienced in trying to determine disputes over doctrine and terminology since they had no definitive written creed to guide them.

> The controversy was beginning to enter very complicated

---

[62] From the Meeting of Ministering Friends in Philadelphia to Friends of the Second Day's Morning Meeting in London, 17 June 1692, Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes, minutes for 17 June 1692.
[63] George Keith to George Fox and George Whitehead, East New Jersey, 22 May 1688, reproduced in Whitehead, The Power of Christ Vindicated, pp.225-232.
[64] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fo.33, minutes of 8 June 1694.
[65] Keith and Budd, An Account of the Great Divisions, p.3.

theological territory. Keith was expecting Friends to be able to demonstrate doctrinal soundness relating to a number of questions: Does the inner light reveal everything that is necessary to salvation? Are good people who have never heard the Scriptures preached excluded from Christianity? What is the nature of Christ's ascended body? When people die, do they immediately receive their full measure of reward or punishment or must they wait until a final Day of Judgement? Keith had evidently thought deeply about these questions and more. At this point, he still believed that both the inner light and faith in the historical Christ were essential to salvation. He believed that those who had not heard the Scriptures may be included in Christianity, but to a lesser degree than those who had knowledge of the historical Christ, and that the ascended Christ still had the physical body which he had had on earth, but now in a more glorified nature. He expected a physical Second Coming of Christ and a Day of Judgement, at which there would be a physical resurrection of the dead, with each person attaining their full reward or punishment at this point rather than at the point of death.[66]

Keith believed that his answers were those of a good Christian and that any deviation from this position was erroneous. Other Friends had not pondered so earnestly upon the

---

[66] Keith's doctrinal position at this time is set out in The Christian Faith of the People of God...in Rhode-Island, Philadelphia, 1692, pp.3-8; Keith et al., Some Reasons and Causes, pp.29-36; George Keith, A Testimony Against that False and Absurd Opinion, [Philadelphia], n.d., reprinted as George Keith, The Christian Quaker, London, 1693, pp.3-12. By 1694, Keith no longer believed that good people who had not heard the Scriptures could be considered Christian: Keith, Truth Advanced, p.45.

intricacies of theology. Keith and his supporters were appalled to note that many saw little necessity to do so.[67] Undoubtedly, the vast majority of Friends did believe in the death and Resurrection of the historical Christ. They also believed that the inner light would teach them anything that was necessary to their salvation. They were content to leave it at that but they were unprepared to answer the doctrinal probing of the pedantic Keith.

The Separation

It will be seen that as the controversy moved into open separation, the doctrinal issues became clouded by personal antipathy. During the twelve months following the 1691 Yearly Meeting, opinion crystallised. Although Keith had not been disowned by Friends at this point, it was clear that he was at odds with other leading Friends, many of whom held positions of political and judicial power, such as Thomas Lloyd who was Deputy Governor. Considering the complexity of some of the doctrinal issues, it is not surprising that the composition of the two sides was largely determined by political affiliation. Opponents of Lloyd and other leading politicians had probably been impressed to see or hear of Keith turning his fiery temper upon these men at the Yearly Meeting.

Relations between the two sides quickly deteriorated and matters came to a head in early 1692. In January, Thomas

---

[67] Keith et al, Some Reasons and Causes, p.22.

Fitzwater accused Keith of denying the sufficiency of the inner light to salvation without something else. By 'something else', Keith had apparently meant the physical Christ, although he may not have made this clear to his hearers. The February 1692 Philadelphia Monthly Meeting was adjourned to consider the matter. However, it appears that only the Keithian side recognised the legitimacy of the adjourned meeting and attended in significant numbers. They therefore took the opportunity to condemn Fitzwater and Stockdale. They also sanctioned the printing of Keith's creed, The Christian Faith of the People of God...in Rhode-Island, which had been adopted by Rhode Island Friends for use against the attacks of ex-Quaker, Christian Lodowick. A few days later, the March Quarterly Meeting refused to recognise the adjourned Monthly Meeting or its decisions and refused to allow the business of that meeting to be entered in the minute book.[68] Thus, in Keith's opinion, his opponents initiated the separation by refusing to recognise a lawfully adjourned meeting.[69]

Philadelphian Friends were in the habit of holding two Meetings for Worship during the Summer months. The morning meeting was held at the Centre meeting-house and the afternoon one at the Bank meeting-house. During the Winter, however, there would be an 11.00a.m. meeting at each of the two meeting-houses, but no afternoon meeting. Approximately every six months, Philadelphia Monthly Meeting would sanction the appropriate seasonal change. On 25 March 1692, the decision was made to

---

[68] A Farther Account of the Great Divisions, pp.9-12.
[69] A Farther Account of the Great Divisions, p.10.

return to the Summer system.[70] However, Keith and his supporters objected to the change. They probably did so out of anger, as this was just three weeks after the business of their adjourned monthly Meeting had been condemned. Keith claimed that the meeting times should not have been changed because, in contradiction to Friends' usual practice, they had been changed by majority vote rather than by unanimous agreement. He and his supporters therefore continued to hold Sunday morning meetings separately at the Bank meeting-house. When they were locked out of this building, they began to meet elsewhere. Thus, in the opinion of Keith's opponents, Keith and his supporters had initiated the breach by establishing separate meetings.[71]

On 18 April 1692, Keith and his adherents sent 'Some Propositions in order to Heal the Breach' to their opponents. This was a list of demands rather than a serious attempt to restore unity. Keith's opponents were most unlikely to accept the conditions that the Keithian party placed upon a reconciliation. There was also little chance that they would believe that Keith genuinely sought reconciliation, since he had very recently charged the Meeting of Ministers with being come together 'to cloak error and heresy' and had declared that:

> There was not more damnable errors, and doctrines of devils amongst any of the Protestant professions, than was amongst the Quakers.[72]

In 'Some Propositions', as well as renewing Keith's demand

---

[70] Philadelphia MM Minutes, minutes for 25 March 1692.
[71] Jennings, The State of the case, p.18.
[72] Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes, minutes for 5 March 1692.

that all Friends make a declaration of their faith in fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, Keith and his supporters demanded that Stockdale and Fitzwater condemn their false accusations against Keith and that various other Friends condemn their false accusations and doctrinal errors. Those charged with doctrinal errors included such prominent leading Friends and politicians as Thomas Lloyd and Arthur Cooke. Keith and his associates blamed Lloyd for asserting that Stockdale and others may be good Christians if they obey the light within them, though they believe not in the man Christ Jesus without them. They criticised Cooke for querying, 'where doth the Scripture say we are to believe both in Christ within us and in Christ without us?'

It is interesting to note that although both sides denied initiating the separation, Keith and his supporters asserted that until those they accused should clear themselves regarding fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, 'we are satisfied that our separation from you is just…we have peace in it'. Perhaps most significantly, they asserted that anyone who owned the ministry of the accused and listened to them preach and pray in their meetings 'are guilty with them and partakers of sin'.[73] This was a far greater attack upon the ministerial authority of these Friends than Keith's paper, 'Gospel Order and Discipline' had been.

---

[73] 'Some propositions in order to heal the breach that is amongst us, directed to Thomas Lloyd and others concerned with him', 18 April 1692, transcribed in Frost, Keithian Controversy, pp.155-163. The document is signed by Keith, Budd, Bradford, James Chirk and William David.

Needless to say, 'Some Propositions' did not bring about a healing of the breach among Pennsylvanian Friends. Other attempts to end the separation were equally unsuccessful. In March, the Meeting of Ministers had appointed members to exhort Keith to repentance for the charges that he had made against their meeting. However, Samuel Jennings and Griffith Owen reported back that:

> He denied our authority, he denied our judgement, he did not value it a pin, he would trample upon it as dirt under his feet; he said further he would prove we maintained rank popery, and that there was not any one of us all that did preach Christ rightly…[74]

Keith also condemned visiting English Friends, Thomas Wilson and James Dickenson, who sought to help restore unity in April or early May 1692. Keith condemned them both verbally and by keeping on his hat as a sign of disunity with Dickenson when he prayed. Furthermore, Keith and his supporters published, Some Reasons and Causes against their opponents in May or early June 1692.[75]

Relations between the opposing sides had also deteriorated to the point that debate had degenerated into personal reflections and name-calling. The terms used against Keith by

---

[74] Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes. The date of this minute is given erroneously as 4:5:1692 [i.e. July 1692]. Since this minute precedes that of 17 June 1692, the minute obviously refers to a meeting which took place prior to that date, perhaps on either 4 May or 5 June 1692.
[75] From the Meeting of Ministering Friends in Philadelphia to Friends of the Second Day's Morning Meeting in London, 17 June 1692, Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes, minutes for 17 June 1692.

his opponents included 'apostate', 'pope' and 'devil'.[76] Keith called leading Pennsylvanian Friends, 'fools, ignorant heathens, infidels, silly souls, liars, heretics, rotten ranters, muggletonians…'[77] He caused greatest offence by calling Friends in their religious meetings:

> Hypocrites, vipers, bloodthirsty hounds, impudent rascals, and such like, bidding them cut him in collops, fry him, and eat him; and saying his back had long itched to be whipped.[78]

The exchange of insults demonstrates the level of personal antipathy involved in the controversy. The members of the opposing sides clearly despised each other. Keith did not believe that his opponents were fit to hold positions of spiritual authority and they viewed him as an arrogant and ambitious troublemaker. As Jennings argued:

> The general cause [of the breach] I take to be an unfounded ambition in G.K. which had blown him up into such towery thoughts of himself as made him a very uneasy member of any society, either civil or religious…[79]

Leading Friends therefore felt no inclination to make further efforts to reclaim Keith. Even if they had felt such a desire, they could not afford to exercise leniency. Keith had offended Friends with his angry behaviour and abusive language and, more

---

[76] Thomas Budd et al., An Expostulation with Thomas Lloyd, Samuell Jenings, [Philadelphia, 1692], p.6. This was signed on behalf of the Keithian meeting on 18 July 1692.
[77] A True Copy of Three Judgments, [Philadelphia, 1692], pp.3-4. This was issued by the Keithian meeting at the house of Phillip James in Philadelphia on 3 July 1692.
[78] Jennings, The State of the Case, p.23.
[79] Jennings, The State of the Case, p.13.

seriously, he and his associates had sought to undermine the authority of leading Friends both to preach and to administer discipline. Moreover, these attacks had been made publicly, both in meetings and in print.

The Meeting of Ministers lost no time in condemning Keith. On 17 June 1692, they composed a letter to the Second Day's Morning Meeting in London, detailing Keith's behaviour.[80] They also drew up a testimony against Keith and his associates, which was issued on 20 June and was addressed to the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in Pennsylvania, East and West New Jersey and elsewhere.[81] Both documents were signed by twenty-eight members of the Meeting of Ministers and the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting signalled its approval of the condemnation of Keith a few days later.[82] Written in an uncompromising tone, these two documents laid the blame for the separation squarely at Keith's door. Friends also asserted their own doctrinal soundness and detailed the efforts they had made to restore unity. Thus, the leading Pennsylvanian Friends defended their spiritual authority against Keith's charges. Within weeks they also found themselves called upon to defend their worldly authority.

The Trial of George Keith

Keith and his supporters publicised the incompatibility of

---

[80] From the Meeting of Ministering Friends in Philadelphia to Friends of the Second Day's Morning Meeting in London, 17 June 1692, Philadelphia Ministers' Minutes, minutes for 17 June 1692.
[81] A True Copy of Three Judgments, pp.2-5.
[82] Philadelphia MM Minutes, minutes for 24 June 1692.

Quaker principles and worldly government, thereby undermining the authority of the Friends involved in the government of the province. It will be argued that Keith's opponents had no choice but to take legal action against him and his fellow offenders.

Following their condemnation, Keith and his associates published in self-vindication a number of pamphlets. This was easily accomplished as William Bradford, the owner of the only printing-press in Pennsylvania, was one of Keith's supporters.[83] In August 1692 as the September Yearly Meeting at Burlington approached, Keith and his supporters published an appeal to the Yearly Meeting delegates against the judgement of the Meeting of Ministers. An Appeal from the Twenty Eight Judges, consisted of twelve queries. The first eight queries considered the fairness of the judgement and matters of doctrine. However, the last four queries concerned the actions of Quaker Justices and politicians. They propounded that it was a transgression of Friends' principles for these men to commission armed men, to provide Indians with powder and lead to fight each other, and to pass death sentences upon criminals. They queried:

> Whether there is any example or precedent for it in Scripture, or in all Christendom, that ministers should engross the worldly government, as they do here? Which hath proved of a very evil tendency.[84]

---

[83] David Johns has suggested that Bradford may have supported Keith due to disillusionment with governing Friends who frequently criticised his printing: David L. Johns, 'Convincement and Disillusionment: Printer William Bradford and the Keithian Controversy in Colonial Philadelphia', JFHS, 57 (1994-1996), pp.21-32.

[84] George Keith et al., An Appeal from the Twenty Eight Judges, [Philadelphia, 1692], p.7.

Keith and his supporters did not actually claim that any Quaker magistrate had issued a death sentence. However, they were able to give the example of the hiring of armed men to recapture a sloop stolen by pirates. The questions were pertinent because such actions did contradict Friends' testimony against the use of carnal weapons. However, no government could function effectively without the power to use physical force. Thus the Keithian group highlighted the incompatibility of Quaker ideals and the duties of civil authorities, exposing Quaker magistrates, constables and politicians as hypocrites and calling into question the validity of their position. Having attacked Lloyd, Jennings and others as public Friends, they were now attacking them as governors and law-enforcers. Such attacks could not be left unanswered. Keith and his associates brought the force of the law upon themselves.

As soon as An Appeal had been printed and, according to Keith and his associates, before more than a couple of copies had been distributed, a warrant was issued and Bradford was arrested.[85] Some of his printing type and the remaining copies of An Appeal were seized. John McComb, who had distributed two copies of the pamphlet was also arrested. Keith was charged with publicly reviling the Deputy Governor and with accusing the Quaker magistrates of engrossing the magistratical power. The town crier proclaimed him 'a seditious person, and an enemy to the King and Queen's Government'. Peter Boss was imprisoned for writing a defamatory letter to Jennings, and Budd was also

---

[85] The Keithian account of the arrests and trials is given in New-England's Spirit of Persecution, [New York], 1693, reprinted as The Tryals of Peter Boss, London, 1693.

charged.[86]

At a court in Philadelphia on 4 October 1692, John McComb's licence to keep an ordinary was removed. The other men were tried at the Philadelphia sessions on 9, 10 and 12 December. Although the Keithian account of the trial is biased, it is clear that they were not given a fair trial. They were charged with offences against the Quaker magistrates, yet eight of the ten Justices on the bench at their trials were Friends, including Jennings whom they were accused of defaming. The eight did include Robert Turner, a Keithian sympathiser. The accused objected to the jury, which allegedly mainly consisted of Friends who were prejudiced against Keith and his supporters. However, their objections were not allowed. Boss was found guilty only of speaking slightingly of a magistrate but the bench fined him £6. Keith and Budd were accused, as authors of The Plea of the Innocent, of defaming Jennings. They were found guilty of saying that Jennings had behaved too highly and imperiously in worldly courts and fined £5 each. However, Keith and Budd's fines were not actually levied, a fact which Keith later admitted.[87] The jury failed to determine whether Bradford had printed An Appeal and whether it tended to the weakening of the hands of the magistrates and the encouragement of wickedness. Bradford was imprisoned until the next Sessions.

---

[86] Jennings reproduced Boss's letter accusing him of drunkenness, wagering, cruelty to his servants and so forth, along with his own denial of those charges in Jennings, The State of the Case, pp.59-74. Interestingly, The State of the Case was not widely circulated in Pennsylvania: Philadelphia MM Minutes, minutes for 26 April 1695. Daniel Leeds claimed its circulation was suppressed to hide Jennings's lies: Daniel Leeds, The Innocent Vindicated, [New York?], 1695, p.6.

[87] Jennings, The State of the Case, p.56; George Keith, A Further Discovery of the Spirit of Falsehood, London, 1694, p.46.

Keith claimed that the trial was persecution rather than prosecution and Butler argues that, since public Friends had won an easy victory at the Yearly Meeting, which is described below, their subsequent pursuit of Keith in the courts can only be regarded as an exercise in personal retribution.[88] However, this is not the case. Keith clearly was not silenced by the Yearly Meeting's decision. Also, the attacks upon Quaker magistrates in An Appeal and The Plea of the Innocent could not go unpunished. An Appeal, in particular, called into question the right of the magistrates and other officers to carry out their duties. There was a chance that if enough people were influenced by the pamphlet, these officers would lose their power to prosecute offenders. If the magistrates had turned a blind eye to the contents of An Appeal, it would have given the go-ahead to other political rivals to make similar attacks and the already unstable government of Pennsylvania might have been endangered. The fact that Keith and Budd's fines were never levied indicates that Keith's opponents were determined to humiliate them with a guilty verdict but never intended to punish them severely.

Keith and his supporters were equally determined to avoid losing face. On 28 February 1693, the Keithian Monthly Meeting held at Phillip James's house issued a pamphlet against Friends' involvement in worldly government.[89] They presumably felt confident to publish this without risk of incurring further

---

[88] Butler, '"Gospel Order Improved": The Keithian Schism and the Exercise of Quaker Ministerial Authority in Pennsylvania', William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, 31 (1974), pp.431-452.
[89] Thomas Budd and John Hart, A Testimony and Caution, [Philadelphia, 1692], p.11.

prosecution because Penn's Governorship had recently been suspended and Lloyd and his supporters had fallen from power with the appointment of Governor Benjamin Fletcher. Indeed, Keith, Boss and Bradford petitioned the new Governor. In answer to their requests, Bradford's printing equipment was returned to him, Boss was released from imprisonment for refusal to pay his fine and Keith received what amounted to the restitution of his good name.[90]

1692 Burlington Yearly Meeting

During the time that Keith and the others accused were awaiting trial, the 1692 Yearly Meeting at Burlington had been called upon to consider the separation. Clearly Bradford had not lost enough of his printing equipment to prevent him from operating his press, as he quickly reprinted An Appeal. Copies were posted around the town a week before the meeting took place. When the Yearly Meeting was held, Keith and his supporters met separately from other Friends. Those who met with Keith issued a paper overturning the judgement of the Meeting of Ministers and condemning Keith's opponents.[91] Meanwhile, the official Yearly Meeting upheld the judgement of the Meeting of Ministers and disowned Keith and his supporters, declaring:

> We have not nor cannot have unity in spirit with any of them until they return and repent of their evils.[92]

---

[90] Kirby, George Keith, p.92.
[91] 'From the Yearly Meeting at Burlington', reproduced in George Keith et al., The Judgment Given Forth, London, 1694, pp.20-22.
[92] 'From our Yearly Meeting held in Burlington', 7 September 1692, FHL, Portfolio MSS, Vol.6, no.44.

The Keithian judgement was signed by 70 men whilst that of the official Yearly Meeting was signed by over 200. This indicates that approaching one-third of the Friends present in Burlington at the time of the Yearly Meeting favoured Keith. This was clearly a serious division. The size of the split in the 1692 Burlington Yearly Meeting compared with the unanimity of the 1695 London Yearly meeting, described below, indicates that Keith enjoyed far greater support in Pennsylvania than he was to enjoy in England. This may be further evidence that Nash is correct in claiming that many Pennsylvanians supported Keith for political and economic reasons. Because friends in England lacked the political power of those in Pennsylvania, there was no political or economic incentive for English Friends to support Keith. Friends in Barbados, Virginia, Maryland, East and West New Jersey, Long Island and Rhode Island apparently followed the majority of Pennsylvanian Friends in giving judgement against Keith and his associates.[93]

It is interesting to note that the official 1692 Yearly Meeting did not mention doctrinal differences in its condemnation of Keith and his supporters. The judgement cited:

> his vile abuses and ungodly speeches against God's people and also his separation from them and exposing of them in print, and otherwise endeavouring by his misrepresentations of them to make them the derision of

---

[93] Hugh Roberts to William Penn, transcribed in PMHB, 18 (1894), pp.205-210. Although the letter bears no place or date, Roberts's expression of regret that Penn has 'lost the government of this country' indicates that he is writing from Pennsylvania probably at the end of 1692 or in early 1693.

the heathen and scorn of fools.[94]

This indicates that Friends were more concerned about the public image of Quakerism, and perhaps their personal reputations, than they were about Keith's doctrinal position. Keith argued again and again that his opponents were unjust in condemning him when they did not charge him with any doctrinal error. In 1695, when he was disowned by London Yearly Meeting, Keith was still complaining that he was tried without being accused of any offence either in his doctrine or his manner of life or conversation.[95]

Keith evidently believed that a disownment was unjust unless it was for error of doctrine. He was also doubtless trying to goad Friends into making a doctrinal charge against him so that he could claim this as evidence of their doctrinal unsoundness, confident as he was that his own theological position was free from errors. What Keith failed or refused to realise was that Friends had never insisted upon doctrinal unsoundness as a prerequisite for disownment. Members were generally disowned for bringing Friends and Truth into disrepute and for remaining unrepentant for so doing. These offences included persistent drunkenness or marrying a non-Quaker in an Anglican church. Despite his insistence to the contrary, Keith had offended Friends with his life and conversation. He had separated from Friends, attempted to undermine the authority of leading Quakers, exposed Friends and Truth to public derision and burdened their worship with his offensive language. Many

---

[94] 'From our Yearly Meeting held in Burlington', 7 September 1692, FHL, Portfolio MSS, Vol.6, no.44.
[95] G[eorge] Keith, The Pretended Yearly Meeting, London, 1695, p.7.

Friends had been disowned for less. The Burlington Yearly Meeting was therefore able to disown Keith without having to consider the doctrinal differences. It thereby avoided the difficulties of defining sound doctrine or being forced to examine or justify the beliefs of individual Friends.

In December 1692, one of Keith's opponents did accuse him of heresy. John Delavall, son-in-law to Thomas Lloyd and an erstwhile sympathiser of Keith, charged Keith with denying the sufficiency of the light to salvation. Keith was delighted as he hoped that this would prove his opponents' deceit in trying to deny that there were any doctrinal differences between the opposing sides.[96] Keith and Delavall debated privately in writing but Keith was keen to hold a public debate. Delavall agreed. However, Lloyd evidently saw that this would bring Quaker doctrine under public scrutiny and forbade the meeting.[97]

Keith Leaves Pennsylvania

Although for a couple of years Keith had been planning to return to England, he actually remained in Pennsylvania for a further year following his disownment and his trial. Presumably he was making efforts to strengthen his separate meetings so that they would survive after his return to England. Probably for the edification of his adherents, Keith wrote a detailed doctrinal treatise, Truth Advanced. In this he identifies and addresses what he considers to be doctrinal errors. It was

---

[96] George Keith, The Heresie and Hatred, Philadelphia, 1693, p.3.
[97] Keith, The Heresie and Hatred, p.5 [mistakenly numbered '7'].

published after he sailed for England.[98] It was also during this period that Keith and his adherents published a pamphlet against the practice of keeping black slaves.[99] This was highly innovative as it was written nearly a century before Friends denounced slavery completely. The pamphlet probably caused further annoyance to Keith's opponents as there was an increasing tendency among wealthy Pennsylvanian Friends at this time to purchase slaves. In fact, by 1698 the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting was alarmed at the influx of slaves and recommended that Friends should either bring their slaves to Meetings for Worship or restrain them or otherwise prevent them from gathering together in companies.[100]

Throughout the year preceding Keith's return to England, the division remained deep and hostility and bitterness continued between the opposing sides. Meetings for Worship were often the scenes of angry exchanges as Keith and his supporters would often attend their opponents' meetings. The notorious destruction of the gallery at one of the meeting-houses was probably not as dramatic as historians have reported. In January 1693, Keith's supporters erected a second gallery in the meeting-house from which Keith could harangue his opponents in their gallery. Nash reports that at meeting time one Sunday:

> Axes appeared from nowhere as each group sought to destroy the other's gallery. Posts, railings, stairs, seats - all

---

[98] Truth Advanced was probably published by Bradford who had moved to New York.

[99] An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes, [Philadelphia, 1693]. This was issued by the Keithian Monthly Meeting in Philadelphia on 13 October 1693.

[100] Philadelphia MM Minutes, minutes for 30 September and 28 October 1698.

> went down before the angry blows of the two opposed camps.[101]

Butler and Frost have followed Nash's description. However, the reality was less dramatic. These events did not occur at meeting time and only a handful of people was present on the evening of the galleries' destruction, rather than two angry mobs. Robert Turner, one of the meeting-house trustees and a supporter of Keith was asked to remove the Keithian gallery:

> with more heat than true zeal, and as he said afterwards, with a dissatisfaction to galleries, striking only a transient blow at the new one, he fell severely upon Friends' gallery and…cut and tore down in an impetuous manner the stairs, seat, floor, posts and rails thereof, levelling it with the floor. G.K. being present, laughed and expressed his satisfaction therewith.[102]

Turner was rebuked by the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting but remained unrepentant.[103]

The erection of the second gallery, more than the destruction, testifies to the level of hostility demonstrated during Quaker worship. These meetings can hardly have been the peaceful waiting upon the Lord that they might have been. The separation in Pennsylvania and its neighbouring provinces continued after Keith's departure. However, Keith was by far the

---

[101] Nash, Quakers and Politics, p.153. Nash cites Kirby as the source of his information. However, Kirby's description of events bears little resemblance to Nash's and agrees with contemporary accounts, Kirby, George Keith, p.87.

[102] Jennings, The State of the Case, p.25.

[103] Philadelphia MM Minutes, minutes for 24 February 1693. Turner is an interesting case because, although he supported Keith, he continued to attend and trouble the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.

most vocal of the separatists, so Pennsylvanian Friends must have felt a sense of relief when he finally set his affairs in order and sailed for England.

The Controversy Reaches England

It will be seen that Keith continued to attack Friends' emphasis upon the inner light and that anti-Quaker writers joined him in making these charges. Keith's personality and Friends' concern for the public image of Quakerism were central to the controversy. Friends struggled to answer Keith's charges because of their unwillingness to retract the theological statements of George Fox and other early Friends.

Appeal to the 1694 London Yearly Meeting

It will be demonstrated that the power of the London Yearly Meeting was such that Keith's disownment by the Burlington Yearly Meeting was not considered binding in England. Keith was still considered to be a Friend when he appealed to the 1694 London Yearly Meeting. He was not disowned by English Friends at this time. However, he received the chief share of the blame for the division among Friends in Pennsylvania. Again, Keith was blamed not for his doctrine but for his spirit and for bringing reproach upon Truth. Friends' concern for their public image was intensified by the nature of Keith's accusations, which threatened Friends' protection under the Act of

Toleration.

Keith arrived in London in the Winter of 1693-4. He was accompanied by his wife and two of his daughters and by two of his supporters, Thomas Budd and Robert Hannay. Braithwaite claims that Keith carried the controversy with him to England.[104] However, it is clear that many Friends throughout England and elsewhere were aware of the division among Pennsylvanian Friends at least a year before Keith arrived in London. In June 1692, as mentioned above, the Philadelphia Meeting of Ministers wrote to the Morning Meeting in London concerning the division. A minute of the 25 November 1692 Meeting of Sufferings indicates that leading London Friends had been in correspondence with Pennsylvanian Friends concerning the division.[105] Similarly, the January and February 1693 minutes of the Morning Meeting mention letters to be sent to those concerned in the division in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In February, the Morning Meeting also approved the publication of George Whitehead's doctrinal statement, The Christian Doctrine and Society, in which he sets out to clear the main body of Friends from the doctrinal errors with which Keith had accused his opponents in Pennsylvania.[106]

Other Friends in London and further afield also learned of the separation during early 1693 by reading reprints of Keith's pamphlets relating to the controversy. Keith or one of his associates had sent copies of these works over from

---

[104] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.483.
[105] Meeting for Sufferings Minutes, FHL, MS, Vol.8, fo.176.
[106] Morning Meeting Minutes, Vol.2, fos.19-20, minutes for 23 January, 6 February and 13 February 1693.

Philadelphia. They arrived in England in November 1692. In the hope of suppressing them, the Meeting for Sufferings bought these books from Thomas Tryon, an entrepreneurial publisher who had claimed them from the customs house by order of the Bishop of London. However, Tryon kept a few copies and sold them to London publishers and booksellers who reprinted them and hawked them about the streets of the city.[107] Clearly there was a market for this type of literature. Evidently, the English public of the seventeenth century took as much pleasure in reading about the discomfiture of others as they do today. Consequently, Friends and society at large were well aware of the controversy before Keith returned to England.

Keith came to London with the intention of appealing against his Pennsylvanian opponents to the 1694 London Yearly Meeting. He probably hoped for a favourable outcome from the Yearly Meeting. Whilst he was still in Pennsylvania, leading English Friends had initially indicated their support for Keith. Writing probably in early 1693, Hugh Roberts felt constrained to write to Penn, to complain that Penn had strengthened Keith's hand by writing a letter of encouragement to him. Roberts was also very upset that a meeting in London had sent two epistles to Pennsylvanian Friends claiming that 'we have not kept our places but have been too hasty in judging G.K. and others'. Roberts asserted:

> I would not have thee to think that I or any of us are offended with our brethren at London...but this I must tell

---

[107] Meeting for Sufferings Minutes, FHL, MS, Vol.8, fos.171-183, minutes for 22, 25, 28 and 30 November and 2 December 1692.

> thee, that your great jealousy of us have added to our exercise.[108]

However, by the time that the 1694 Yearly Meeting approached, the tide of opinion among English Friends was turning against Keith. The tone of The Christian Doctrine and Society indicates that George Whitehead and the other leading Friends who put their names to this paper were beginning to side against Keith. Whitehead blames Keith's party for exposing the weaknesses of others in print and denies that there is any doctrinal basis to the controversy. Perhaps in the hope of downplaying the severity of the division and reducing public interest in the matter, Whitehead indicates that he believes the controversy was caused by 'personal offences or private occasions' and states, 'we see no real cause for these few persons aforesaid to divide or separate outwardly'.[109]

On 1 May 1694 London Six Weeks Meeting heard Keith's complaint that:

> by means of some books his name is to or reports from beyond sea, there is a straight upon some Friends about receiving his testimony.[110]

However, it seems that Friends' displeasure with Keith owed as much to his character as to reports concerning the controversy. Immediately upon his return to London, Keith made a great disturbance at a public meeting by bearing an angry testimony

---

[108] Hugh Roberts to William Penn, transcribed in PMHB, 18 (1894), pp.205-210.
[109] George Whitehead et al., The Christian Doctrine and Society, London, 1693, p.17.
[110] London Six Weeks Meeting Minutes, FHL, MS, Vol.3, fo.48.

against Jennings.[111] Henry Gouldney observed that Keith's character and behaviour, rather than his doctrinal position, were alienating him from Friends:

> He is not a man governed with that meekness that becomes his doctrine…His doctrines, in the general, are I think owned by all sound Friends, but he seems to lay down about seven points which he calls fundamentals in any of whom, if we disagree in, he cannot hold fellowship, though upon the whole, was not his spirit wrong, that would easily be accommodated.[112]

Gouldney also mentions that Penn and Whitehead were chiefly responsible for handling Keith, which indicates that even Penn was inclining against Keith by this point.

The 1694 London Yearly Meeting was convened on 28 May. Keith and Budd attended, as did Jennings and Thomas Duckett who had also crossed the Atlantic to present their point of view to the Yearly Meeting. Keith hoped that the meeting would signify its approval of his doctrine, agree that he had exposed genuine doctrinal errors among Pennsylvanian Friends and condemn his opponents for taking legal action against him and his associates. Jennings and Duckett hoped that the Yearly Meeting would clear them and their associates of Keith's charges against them and uphold the judgement of the Pennsylvania Meeting of Ministers and the 1692 Burlington Yearly Meeting against Keith. Presumably each party hoped that the other would be blamed for

---

[111] Thomas Ellwood, An Epistle to Friends, London, 1694, p.68; George Keith, A Seasonable Information and Caveat, London, 1694, p.38.
[112] Henry Gouldney to Sir John Rodes, 27 April 1694, transcribed in Mrs Godfrey Locker Lampson, ed., A Quaker Post-Bag, London, 1910, pp.56-59.

the division.

Although Keith was a highly esteemed Friend, it is indicative of the authority of the London Yearly Meeting that Keith's condemnation by the Burlington Yearly Meeting and similar meetings in other American provinces was not sufficient to secure English Friends' condemnation of Keith. American Yearly Meetings were evidently answerable to the London Yearly Meeting. Roberts had claimed that many English Friends had little regard for those who had emigrated to America, believing that they had done so to avoid persecution or to seek worldly greatness.[113] If true, this may also explain why Keith was still regarded as a Friend by English Friends and was permitted to present his case personally to the Yearly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting clearly sought to make a fair determination of the case. It continued to sit for several days after other business was concluded in order to examine all the evidence provided by the opposing parties. Friends diligently considered Keith's printed works relating to the controversy, numerous epistles and certificates, attestations of good character, Jennings's at that time unpublished 'The State of the Case' and the epistles of both the official and Keithian 1692 Yearly Meetings. They also heard both Keith and Jennings speak their minds.[114] Having heard all the evidence, the delegates were then invited to give their assessment of the case before a paper

---

[113] Hugh Roberts to William Penn, transcribed in PMHB, 18 (1894), pp.205-210.
[114] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fos.20, 23-32.

giving the sense of the meeting was drawn up.[115]

The Yearly Meeting concluded that there had been too much 'height of spirit on both sides' but that the responsibility for the separation lay at Keith's door. It accepted that a few people had given offence 'either through erroneous doctrine, unsound expressions, or weakness, forwardness, want of wisdom and right understanding' but blamed Keith for exposing and spreading these errors in print, particularly in England and other places unconcerned in the differences. The meeting felt that the Quaker magistrates had too highly resented reflection and that it would have been better if they had borne Keith's criticisms quietly instead of taking legal action against him. However, the Yearly Meeting did not feel that it was its place to consider the legality or illegality of the trials. It is clear that Friends were much more upset about the publication of the trials than they were about the fact that the trials had taken place:

> The book of the printed trial of the proceedings where Quakers are represented to persecute Quakers has done great hurt…and occasioned great reproach upon the said people in this nation; whereby many of our enemies insult over us, as if we were a people swayed by a persecuting spirit, saying we know what the Quakers would do if they had power in their hands…

The Yearly Meeting advised that Keith and others should cease reflecting upon each other, that Keith should endeavour to heal the breach and that he must either call in his pamphlets or

---

[115] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fos.32-45.

publish something to clear Friends from his charges of erroneous doctrine and to retract the bitter language used in his pamphlets.[116]

It is clear that the Friends of the London Yearly Meeting did not find any fault with Keith's doctrine. They were angry that Keith had caused a division among Friends and that he had used bitter and abusive language against them. However, probably more than anything else, they were furious that Keith had publicly humiliated Friends by exposing their divisions and the alleged doctrinal errors in print. Friends still feared the loss of the protection afforded them by the 1689 Act of Toleration. Anti-Trinitarian belief was considered completely unacceptable in late seventeenth-century England, as demonstrated by the fact that Unitarians had been excluded from the benefits of the Toleration Act.[117] In Spring 1689, the Meeting of Sufferings and Morning Meeting had hurried to publicise the orthodoxy of Friends' belief, as rumours that they were also guilty of Socinianism threatened their inclusion in the toleration.[118] By charging them with undervaluing Christ, Keith put the Society of Friends at risk of exclusion from toleration and of a renewal of persecution.

Defiance of the Yearly Meeting's Advice

As Keith went about defying the advice of the 1694 Yearly

---

[116] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fos.50-60.
[117] Watts, Dissenters, p.372.
[118] Wykes, 'Friends, Parliament and the Toleration Act', JEH, 45 (1994), pp.42-63.

Meeting, Friends began to answer Keith in print. It became clear that Keith's position was changing as he began to view Scripture as of greater authority than the inner light. He was moving further away from Friends and from their principles.

The 1694 Yearly Meeting's sense and advice signalled a turning point in the development of the Keithian Controversy and in Keith's attitude to the Society of Friends and his place in it. In the unlikely event that the Yearly Meeting had fully vindicated him and thanked him for uncovering gross errors, Keith might have been content to remain within the Society and resumed his role as a prominent, respected Friend. Instead, he now started down the road towards full apostasy from the Society.

Even before he heard the Yearly Meeting's judgement, Keith asserted:

> Nothing that you can give out against me can prevail with me to condemn anything I have done for I find peace and the Lord is with me and I have greater strength than you are aware of.[119]

Having heard the judgement, Keith set about wholesale defiance of the Yearly Meeting's sense and advice. Rather than calling in his offending pamphlets, Keith published The Causeless Ground of Surmises. Kirby has argued that the publication of this pamphlet was a step towards reconciliation.[120] Its title promised 'a full clearing of faithful Friends' and Keith does claim that he had

---

[119] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fo.46.
[120] Kirby, George Keith, p.101.

only charged thirteen Friends with errors. However, this was no attempt at reconciliation; only vindication. Rather than condemning his printed works, Keith defends them and denies that they have caused offence:

> It is strange to us that our faithful and zealous witnessing for the Truth, and against error, should be construed to be the reproach of Truth and Friends of it… He reproves those who reprinted his controversial works in England but he objects to the false titles given to the works, rather than to the reprinting. He blames his opponents for the separation and calls for a written statement of Friends' faith.[121]

Until this point, Friends had not printed a word against Keith or his supporters. However, the publication of The Causeless Ground and of Robert Hannay's A True Account of the Proceedings, was seen as blatant and contemptible defiance of the Yearly Meeting's sense and advice.[122] Some Friends saw no further reason to refrain from printing against Keith and his supporters and a bitter pamphlet war ensued. Thomas Ellwood was the first to print against Keith. He evidently had the support of the Morning Meeting as on 10 September 1694 the meeting approved the publication of his An Epistle to Friends.

---

[121] George Keith, The Causeless Ground of Surmises, London, 1694, pp.1-2, 5-6, 10. In complaining of the title, The Christian Quaker, given to A Testimony Against that False and Absurd Opinion, Keith objects to the use of the term, 'Christian Quaker'. A few contemporaries and many historians have used this term to describe Keith's adherents but they seldom used this term themselves.

[122] Robert Hannay, A True Account of the Proceedings, London, 1694. This was published very soon after the Yearly Meeting and shortly before The Causeless Ground. It contrasts the Yearly Meeting's judgement with that of the Keithian 1692 Burlington Yearly Meeting. It did not mention that this was not the judgement of the official Burlington Yearly Meeting.

Jennings's The State of the Case was approved on 22 October.[123]

Ellwood's pamphlets are worthy of note. Although he was not university educated as Keith was, Ellwood was intelligent and articulate. He also wrote with the self-confidence necessary to challenge Keith in print. He could even match Keith's pedantry and the two men would systematically work their way through each other's books detecting every little inconsistency or apparent misrepresentation.[124] Ellwood was clearly a man who detested those who challenged the main body of Friends. His own experience in favouring Perrot had not made him sympathetic towards such challengers. Instead, it appears to have made him more aware of how easily young and inexperienced Friends may be drawn aside by such dissidents. Consequently, the virulence previously noted in his pamphlets against Wilkinson-Story supporters was equally evident in his writings against Keith:

> He [Keith] says I labour to take from him his innocency and Christian reputation and testimony. Of all which I think he brought but little (if any) into England. What stock of each he carried with him into America, he has (I fear) made shipwreck of there.[125]

Strangely, however, Ellwood contributed little to the pamphlet war with Keith after 1696. The London delegates to the 1696 Yearly Meeting reported that no Friends who had been in unity

---

[123] Morning Meeting Minutes, Vol.2, fos.67, 70.
[124] For example, Keith addresses fifty perversions, misrepresentations and forgeries which he claims to have discovered in Ellwood's An Epistle to Friends: Keith, A Seasonable Information and Caveat, pp.9-42 [mistakenly numbered '40']. Ellwood responds by answering each of these alleged perversions: Thomas Ellwood, A Further Discovery of that Spirit of Contention and Division, London, 1694, pp.18-117.
[125] Ellwood, A Further Discovery of that Spirit of Contention and Division, p.6.

with the main body had 'gone off with George Keith'.[126] Perhaps Ellwood no longer considered Keith worthy of his attention once it became clear that Keith was not succeeding in drawing Friends into his separation.

The virulence of the pamphlets exchanged by Keith and his opponents attests to the deterioration of relations between the opposing sides. However, bitter exchanges were not confined to the written word. There were also angry confrontations between Keith and others at Meetings for Worship. Keith complained to the 1695 Yearly Meeting that he had been interrupted a number of times whilst speaking at Whitehart Court and Ratcliff Meetings. He claimed that William Bingley and John Vaughton had:

> endeavoured to hinder my speaking in meetings, so closely speaking one after another and sometimes making signs, and pulling the coat to stand up and speak, on purpose to prevent my speaking...[127]

Eventually, at a meeting at Ratcliff, Keith abused Penn and Friends in general too much. Penn lost his temper and judged Keith, 'an apostate'.[128] Keith was absolutely furious but, as Ellwood argued:

> As for W.P.'s calling G.K. an apostate, I know not what apter word he could have expressed himself by.[129]

Keith *was* becoming apostatised from the Society of Friends. That Bingley and Vaughton resorted to such actions to

---

[126] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fos.114-115, minutes of 1 June 1696.
[127] G[eorge] Keith, The True Copy of a Paper, London, 1695, pp.4-5.
[128] Keith, The True Copy of a Paper, pp.14-15.
[129] Thomas Ellwood, Truth Defended, London, 1695, p.14.

prevent Keith from preaching shows that they no longer considered Keith to be one of them. Since Friends in their worship were to speak only when moved by the Spirit, the act of encouraging people to speak when they were not so moved or deliberately trying to prevent someone else from speaking was usually seen as despicable. However, there is no evidence that Friends took any action against Bingley and Vaughton. Evidently, Friends no longer believed that Keith was speaking at the instigation of the inner light.

Whilst Friends believed that Keith was no longer in unity with them, Keith was evidently reaching the same conclusion. He still regarded himself as a Friend but in Autumn 1694 he joined the Quaker separatist meeting at Harp Lane.[130] London printer, Nathaniel Crouch, published a collection of sermons preached by members of this meeting, including sermons preached by Keith and Budd as well as by the Wilkinson-Story separatists, Raunce and Harris. It is interesting to note that Keith would often base his sermons upon a passage from Scripture, which is indicative of the fact that he now viewed the Scriptures as having greater authority than the inner light. In one of the sermons, he claimed that he had not selected the passage upon which he was preaching before coming to the meeting.[131] However, the fact that Keith was beginning to preach in this manner indicates that he was moving away from the Quaker mode of preaching towards that of other Christian denominations.

---

[130] John Tomkins to Sir John Rodes, London, 20 December 1694, transcribed in Lampson, ed., A Quaker Post-Bag, pp.116-119.
[131] The Great Doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, London, 1694, p.50.

Just as the failure of Pennsylvanian Friends to adopt 'Gospel Order and Discipline' had led Keith to question their doctrinal soundness, so the failure of the 1694 Yearly Meeting to vindicate his actions led Keith to question the soundness of leading English Friends. He began to trawl through the past writings of leading Friends; texts written before the Toleration Act had made these men more guarded in their theological statements. As the time of the 1695 Yearly Meeting approached, Keith was not only printing against Friends and meeting separately from them but he was also ready to charge some prominent English Friends with gross doctrinal errors.

George Keith's Disownment

The 1695 Yearly Meeting was convened on 13 May.[132] Keith's status among Friends had changed significantly since the previous Yearly Meeting. In 1694, Keith had been a Friend having a serious disagreement with other Friends and appealing to the Yearly Meeting for a decision. Although he had already alienated some English Friends through his printing and hot-tempered behaviour, the 1694 meeting had been prepared to give him a fair hearing. However, by 1695, he had made himself an apostate. He was meeting separately from Friends and he had completely flouted the advice of the 1694 meeting. Friends did allow Keith to present a paper to the 1695 Yearly Meeting but this was as far as their concern for a fair hearing extended. They did not

---

[132] Whilst the official account of the 1695 Yearly Meeting is recorded in the Yearly Meeting minute book, Keith also published an account in Keith, A True Copy of a Paper, pp.8-15.

accede to Keith's demand that those who had manifested their prejudice against him be excluded from judging his case. This is not surprising as the list of those Keith wished to exclude included such prominent Friends as Whitehead and Penn. The meeting's refusal to comply with Keith's demand also demonstrated the strength of its opposition to him.

Keith's paper was calculated to anger the delegates.[133] He complained about Friends who had publicly defamed him, especially Ellwood and John Penington, for their books against him, and the Morning Meeting, which had approved these books and Jennings's The State of the Case. He also complained about those Friends who had interrupted him in his public testimony, as described above. He demanded that Penn make good his charge of apostasy and he declared that some of the delegates were guilty of gross doctrinal errors. Keith says that he pointed to Penn, George Whitehead and John Whitehead as he made this accusation.[134] Keith also declared that the Yearly Meeting was not a truly constituted meeting as only a select number of Friends were allowed to attend it.

Keith challenged the Yearly Meeting to either own or disown him. The Meeting was more than happy to oblige. Friends judged that Keith's spirit and works of division were wrong, declaring that the meeting:

> cannot own nor receive him nor his testimony while he remains therein, but testify against him and his evil

---

[133] Keith later printed his paper in Keith, A True Copy of a Paper, pp.3-7.
[134] Keith, A True Copy of a Paper, p.11.

> works of strife and division as such that tends not only to divide but to unpeople us.

The meeting was asked whether anyone had anything against this statement. No one spoke.[135] A paper giving the sense and advice of the meeting was drawn up. This declared that Keith was being led by an unchristian spirit, which stirred him up to cause strife and divisions, and that his recent behaviour had been to expose Friends and Truth to reproach. The paper recorded that:

> George Keith is gone from the blessed unity of the peaceable Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ and hath thereby separated himself from the holy fellowship of the Church of Christ and that whilst he is in an unreconciled and uncharitable state he ought not to preach or pray in any of Friends' meetings nor be owned nor received as one of us…

Again, the meeting was asked whether anyone objected. Again, no one spoke.[136] Thus the members of the Yearly Meeting unanimously disowned George Keith.

During the meeting, George Whitehead had noted Keith's apparent indifference to the prospect of disownment. Keith claimed that he was not indifferent and that he did not wish to be disowned.[137] However, Keith did believe that he would gain the spiritual advantage if he was disowned, as he believed it would be for bearing his faithful testimony to the doctrine of Christ against gross errors.[138] In fact, it is clear that Keith wanted

---

[135] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fo.85.
[136] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fos.91-94.
[137] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fo.88.
[138] Keith, A True Copy of a Paper, p.13.

to be disowned. Everything that he had done during the twelve months before the 1695 Yearly Meeting left Friends with little inclination to try to keep him within the Society. By giving the meeting the ultimatum to either own or disown him, he gave Friends no choice and indeed provoked them to disown him.

Keith presumably wished to appear as a martyr; the innocent victim of an unjust and corrupt Quaker leadership. This was certainly his intention in his answer to his disownment, The Pretended Yearly Meeting, in which he claims that Friends used 'persuasions and terrifications' to gain the unanimous consent of the Yearly Meeting delegates. This, he says, was 'more like the Spanish Inquisition than a free assembly of sincere Christians'.[139] He evidently hoped to gain support by projecting this image. At this point, he probably hoped to receive the support of other Friends; those who did not share the power of the Quaker leadership. However, it will be seen that Keith increasingly looked beyond the Society of Friends for support.

Public Image - Anti-Quaker Writing

The judgement of the 1695 Yearly Meeting reveals that Keith was not censured for any matter of doctrine. Once again, his condemnation was due to his wrong spirit and to the fact that he had exposed the Society to public reproach. Friends' fears that Keith's printed attacks would bring renewed criticism upon them were not unfounded. Although Keith's attacks did not

---

[139] Keith, The Pretended Yearly Meeting, p.5-6.

result in the feared exclusion of Friends from the toleration, they did lead to a renewal of anti-Quaker writing by providing new ammunition for attacks by both disaffected Friends and other enemies of Quakerism.

The Anglican Church had taken note of Keith's doctrinal charges. William Lancaster, Chaplain to the Bishop of London, sent to the 1695 Yearly Meeting a list of doctrinal queries and requested Friends' answer thereto.[140] These queries were clearly influenced by Keith's criticisms of Friends' doctrine. They concerned the nature of Christ's ascended body, the question of a physical Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, the humanity of Christ and the internal or external nature of the saving blood of Christ.[141] Indeed, John Penington suspected that Keith had composed the queries himself, although there is no evidence to prove this charge.[142]

Francis Bugg and Thomas Crisp also took advantage of Keith's attacks upon Friends. Bugg, for example, published a new edition of New Rome Arraigned a week after the 1694 Yearly Meeting.[143] He had obviously read Keith's works relating to the controversy in Pennsylvania. He accuses Friends of persecuting

---

[140] YM Minutes, Vol.2, fo.88, minutes of 17 May 1695. Morning Meeting approved an answer to these queries on 3 June 1695: Morning Meeting Minutes, Vol.2, fo.88.

[141] W. Lancaster, 'To the Quakers assembled in their Yearly Meeting', 15 May 1695, reproduced in George Keith, Gross Error and Hypocrisie Detected, London, 1695, [preface]. Friends' reply to the queries is also reproduced here. It is signed by seven Friends, including George Whitehead and is dated London, 3 June 1695.

[142] John Pennington, An Apostate Exposed, London, 1695, p.6.

[143] From 1697, Bugg received financial support for his anti-Quaker publishing from members of the Anglican clergy: Richard Clark, '"The Gangreen of Quakerism": An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution', JRH, 11 (1981), pp.404-429.

Keith and his associates in Pennsylvania and charges them with denying the man Christ and the Scriptures.[144] Similarly, in Animadversions on George Whitehead's Book, Crisp uses material from Keith's accounts to argue that Pennsylvanian Friends believed that faith in the physical Christ was not necessary to salvation.[145]

Even more damaging to Friends were the attacks of the non-juring priest and controversial writer, Charles Leslie. Leslie's notable anti-Quaker works were The Snake in the Grass and Satan Disrob'd.[146] Writing anonymously against Friends, Leslie used material from the works of Keith, Bugg, Crisp and others, along with any other titbits of printed material, rumour and hearsay that he could find. Leslie uses the Keithian Controversy to make some pertinent points. He argues that Friends are enraged with Keith because he preaches the necessity to salvation of the physical Christ. He follows Keith in arguing that:

> no other sect amongst us has run into this excess of throwing off the humanity of Christ but the Quakers; because no other has undervalued the Scriptures so much as they.[147]

Bugg's appeal to the anti-Quaker reader lay largely in the malicious tone of his writing and his exaggerated charges

---

[144] Francis Bugg, New Rome Arraigned, 2nd edn., London, 1694, [preface], p.23.
[145] T[homas] C[risp], Animadversions on George Whitehead's Book, London, 1694, p.36.
[146] [Charles Leslie], The Snake in the Grass, London, 1696; [Charles Leslie], Satan Disrob'd, London, 1697. These were answered by G[eorge] W[hitehead], An Antidote against the Venom of the Snake, London, 1697.
[147] [Leslie], The Snake in the Grass, pp.ccxvi-ccxvii, cclxiii.

against Friends. Leslie's style sometimes exhibited these characteristics but he also possessed a deeper level of perception and the ability to present a coherent and convincing argument. For example, Leslie identifies the importance Friends attached to their public image. He observes that the greatest crime a Friend could commit was to expose Friends' errors. He claims that Friends will only speak of the Christ without when forced 'by worldly politics' or give the Scriptures a good word except 'for popularity, when forced to it, to avoid the odium of the world'.[148]

In The Snake in the Grass, Leslie ably turns Friends' belief in the guidance of the inner light upon them. Leslie notes that Friends claim immediate revelation by the Spirit to the same degree as the prophets and Apostles and that this has led them to claim infallibility.[149] He then attempts to negate these claims by citing numerous inconsistencies, failed prophecies and the like throughout Quaker history. Notably, he identifies the essential weakness of Quaker theology which the internal controversies demonstrate; the problem which arises when different Friends claiming immediate guidance from the same inner light are led to opposing beliefs:

> It is pleasant to see them play their infallibilities against one another. For each of these parties pretend to the immediate Spirit of God; and in the Name of God, pronounce the other to be led by a false, ravening spirit.[150]

---

[148] [Leslie], The Snake in the Grass, pp.ccxvi, ccxxvii, cclxviii.
[149] [Leslie], The Snake in the Grass, p.vi.
[150] [Leslie], The Snake in the Grass, p.cl.

Friends' Early Works

It will be seen that in their defence against the charges of Keith, Leslie and others, Friends were hampered by their reluctance to retract doctrinally suspect passages from the writings of early Friends. This reluctance stemmed from the belief that those early Friends had been inspired by the Spirit in their writing. Friends were therefore forced to make spurious reinterpretations of early writings. However, Friends were also able to demonstrate the disparity between Keith's former and current positions by reference to his early writings.

Leslie notes the problem Friends encounter concerning the writings of early Friends. He claims that Friends have 'really gone off from the height of blasphemy and madness' of their early days but they cannot admit that their doctrine has changed because it would reveal that their early doctrine had been erroneous:

> Therefore they take upon them to defend all the writings of George Fox and others of the first Quakers, and turn and wind them to make them (but it is impossible) agree with what they teach now at this day.[151]

On this point, Leslie differs from Keith. Leslie believes that Friends reinterpret early Friends' writings rather than retracting them in order to hide early doctrinal errors. Keith believes that they do this in order to hide current doctrinal

---

[151] [Leslie], The Snake in the Grass, pp.5-7.

errors. In fact, Friends found themselves in a very difficult position concerning their early writings. Whilst they might not have believed that these writings contained doctrinal errors of any significance, there were undoubtedly passages which did not sit well with late seventeenth-century Quakerism.

In some cases, passages in early works were unsuitable to the current political climate. Some pre-Restoration works, for example, contained passages applauding Cromwell or condemning monarchy. If such works were considered in other respects to be relevant to late seventeenth-century Quakerism, they would be re-printed but with the politically incorrect passages omitted. In other cases, Friends had made statements which did not tally with the doctrinal position projected by post-toleration Friends. Trawling through the earlier writings of Friends, Keith discovered and exposed numerous examples of such passages. For example, he quotes George Fox denying that Christ without brings salvation and Richard Hubberthorne claiming that there would be no physical Second Coming.[152]

Unlike politically unsuitable passages, Friends did not retract such doctrinal passages or remove them when reprinting the works in which they were contained. Many of these passages were written by highly revered Friends whose spirituality and faithfulness to the Truth was beyond question in Friends' opinion. To retract or remove such passages would imply that these esteemed Friends had not been guided by the light when

---

[152] George Keith, A Second Narrative, London, 1697, pp.7-8, 21 [mistakenly numbered '37'].

they wrote them or that the light had guided them to erroneous principles. Such an admission would be highly damaging to the reputation of early Friends and of Truth itself. Moreover, late seventeenth-century Friends did not necessarily accept that these passages reflected unsound doctrine. Keith and Friends undoubtedly differed over what constituted doctrinal error. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Friends did issue doctrinal statements that represented their doctrine to be in accordance with that of mainstream Christianity; the criteria by which Keith judged doctrine. However, Quakerism in reality was not bound by such restrictive definitions. Certainly Friends were Christians but their leaders were not prepared to force Friends' consciences concerning specific issues such as the nature of the body of the ascended Christ.

Late seventeenth-century Friends had to balance two concerns: their desire to maintain the spiritual reputation of Truth and of esteemed Friends, such as Fox, and their need to defend their public image. If they had not been concerned for their public image, they might merely have told Keith not to question those who were older in the Truth than he and left it at that. However, because they believed it was necessary to show the outside world that their doctrine was in line with that of other Christians, and therefore worthy of toleration, they could not leave the criticisms of Keith and others unanswered. The method Friends used was to reinterpret the dubious passages so that they appeared to reflect a more conservative theology, claiming that their opponents had misinterpreted early Friends' meaning.

Few of the passages Keith queried came from Friends' recent works, but from those of the 1670s and some earlier works. Consequently, few of the authors were alive to answer Keith's criticisms themselves. This probably made it easier for Friends to reinterpret these Friends' works. No one could prove that the modern interpretation of their words was not the correct one. However, some of the passages Keith queried came from the early works of Friends who were still alive, particularly those of George Whitehead. Keith was astute in questioning passages from Whitehead's works because he believed that Whitehead would be forced either to confess that he had been guilty of erroneous doctrine in his earlier works or to admit that those passages reflected his current doctrinal position. If Whitehead answered Keith's charges he must either lie or lose face. It may well have been for this reason that Whitehead generally avoided answering Keith's charges personally. He busied himself with answering Leslie and Bugg's charges against Friends while Keith's charges against Whitehead were answered by Ellwood and others. In An Answer to George Keith's Narrative, for example, Ellwood answers the charges Keith had levelled against Whitehead in An Exact Narrative.[153]

Friends also sought to counteract Keith's charges against them by attempting to discredit him. One technique that they employed was to go through his works against them, demonstrating how he had misquoted or misconstrued their words, in order to

---

[153] Thomas Ellwood, An Answer to George Keith's Narrative, London, 1696, pp.24-32.

portray him as a false accuser. As previously noted, this was the method that Ellwood and Keith tended to use against each other. More effectively, Friends also sought to demonstrate that controversy had arisen due to shifts in Keith's theological position; that it was he who had changed and not they. As John Penington asserted:

> Truth is the same, God is the same, his people the same, their principles the same, although G.K. is not the same.[154]

By printing passages from Keith's earlier works in which he asserted the same beliefs for which he was now condemning Friends, Penington and others demonstrated that Keith was contradicting his former beliefs. For example, in opposition to Keith's argument in The Pretended Yearly Meeting that Christ's death and sufferings ought to be the first thing that true ministers preach, Penington quotes a passage from Keith's The Way to the City of God, published in 1678:

> The knowledge of his inward coming is that which is the more needful, and in the first place, as being that by which the true and comfortable use of his outward coming is alone sufficiently understood.[155]

George Keith's Transitional Years

Nearly five years elapsed between Keith's disownment by the 1695 Yearly Meeting and his admission to the Church of

---

[154] John Penington, The People Called Quakers Cleared by George Keith, London, 1696, p.7.
[155] Keith, The Pretended Yearly Meeting, p.11 and George Keith, The Way to the City of God, n.p., 1678, p.3, quoted in Penington, The People Called Quakers, p.11.

England. Keith's decision to join the Anglican Church was not inevitable. He sought support from disaffected Friends first but also made successful attempts to ingratiate himself with the Church of England. He caused further embarrassment to Friends and gained much public support himself. The changes in his own doctrinal position became more pronounced and it will be seen that by the end of the 1690s he had abandoned many of his former principles.

Wilkinson-Story Support - Schism Within Schism

As Keith found mainstream Friends unreceptive to his proposed reforms, he looked to the Wilkinson-Story separatists for support. Despite the obvious difference between their doctrinal position and his own, Keith did receive support from some of these separatists and caused a split within the Wilkinson-Story party in Reading.

Although Keith had sought disownment, he did not cease to regard himself as a Friend immediately following his 'excommunication', as he termed it. He saw himself as the champion of pure doctrine and he had initially hoped to bring about a reform of Quaker doctrine from within. Having failed to convince leading Friends to purge the Society of what he considered erroneous doctrine, Keith turned to rank and file and disaffected Friends. Having found support among the Harp Lane separatists, Keith sought the support of other Wilkinson-Story supporters. Ellwood was quick to point out the irony of this

association:

> The pretence for this [Keithian separation] is quite different from that which they [Wilkinson-Story supporters] set up for their separation. Theirs related to discipline, this to doctrine. They alleged that Friends were gone too much from the inward to the outward, this that Friends were gone too much from the outward to the inward...[156]

Of course, Ellwood was right that the two strands of separatist represented opposite positions. However, they did share a common dissatisfaction with the Quaker leadership. In the short term, this was enough. The Harp Lane separatists had probably also been impressed by Keith's personality. He had some of the characteristics of the charismatic separatist leader. Just as Lloyd's Pennsylvanian opponents were impressed by Keith's animated attacks upon the Quaker magistrates, the Harp Lane separatists were probably impressed by Keith's fiery assaults upon the English Quaker leadership.

In a letter of 24 September 1695, John Tomkins reported that Keith had recently visited 'Reading, Wycombe and as far as Marlborough'.[157] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Wilkinson-Story separatist groups existed in both Reading and Wycombe. Unfortunately, only one minute book of a Wilkinson-Story group survives; that of Reading Monthly Meeting. The detailed minute-taking of this meeting dropped off around 1690 so there are no minute book references to indicate how these disaffected Friends

---

[156] Ellwood, An Epistle to Friends, p.9.
[157] John Tomkins to Sir John Rhodes, London, 24 September 1695, transcribed in Lampson, ed., A Quaker Post-Bag, pp.124-126.

viewed Keith. However, there are a couple of printed pamphlets which reveal that Keith's influence had a very divisive affect upon the Wilkinson-Story meeting in Reading. There was a schism among these Friends and a further separatist meeting was established.

The only surviving minute book reference to this division is that of 27 November 1696, which records the decision to print a reply to a book published against the meeting by George Jacques, Robert Sandilands and others.[158] The book referred to was probably The Christian Testimony and the reply, 'The Reading Quakers Vindicated'.[159] This was not a renewal of hostilities between the Wilkinson-Story party and mainstream Friends, but a division within the Wilkinson-Story camp. This is made clear in A Letter to Thomas Curtis, in which the authors mention that they have met for several years with Curtis and others at Sun Lane and they also refer to the separation from the Friends of London Street Meeting over the issue of women's meetings.[160]

William Pain, Jacques and Sandilands, on behalf of others concerned with them, sent a set of doctrinal queries to Thomas Curtis, Benjamin Coale and others. When they received no answer, they published the queries along with their own answers

---

[158] Reading MM Minutes (Wilkinson-Story), p.134, minutes for 27 November 1696.
[159] William Pain et al., The Christian Testimony of Some, Called Quakers, in Reading, London, 1696. This is signed by Pain, Sandilands and Jacques. Thomas Curtis et al, 'The Reading Quakers Vindicated for False Aspersions' does not survive but it is referred to in William Pain et al., A Letter to Thomas Curtis, London, 1697, p.1. This is also signed by Pain, Sandilands and Jacques.
[160] Pain et al., A Letter to Thomas Curtis, pp.2-4.

thereto.[161] Curtis and the others evidently gave some answer to the queries in 'The Reading Quakers Vindicated' but Pain and his associates did not believe their answers to be sincere.[162] Curtis and his associates had evidently noted the influence of Keith in the queries. Pain and his Friends do not deny that influence. Instead, they upbraid Curtis and his Friends for belittling Keith's 'essential principles' by calling them 'notions'.[163] It is clear that, by this point, Pain and others had set up a separate meeting at Gutter Lane and they refused to rejoin the Sun Lane Wilkinson-Story group until they were convinced that this group was doctrinally sound. It is not possible to determine for certain what became of the Gutter Lane Friends. Sandilands certainly renounced Quakerism. In 1700, returning to his native Aberdeen to try to persuade Friends there to renounce their principles, Sandilands's continued association with Keith was clear.[164] Keith claimed that some Reading Friends later received Baptism in the Church of England.[165] He may well have been referring to members of the Gutter Lane group.

Public Meetings

Keith did not remain among the Wilkinson-Story separatists. It will be seen that he established his own separatist meeting and that, in addition to printing against Friends, he also began to hold public meetings to expose

---

[161] Pain et al., The Christian Testimony, pp.3-8.
[162] Pain et al., A Letter to Thomas Curtis, p.3.
[163] Pain et al., A Letter to Thomas Curtis, p.2-3.
[164] Robert Sandilands, Some Queries Proposed to the...Quakers at Aberdeen, Aberdeen, [1700], [Epistle].
[165] George Keith, George Keith's Fourth Narrative, London, 1700, p.113.

Friends' doctrinal errors.

Keith had evidently found some support amongst Wilkinson-Story separatists but not sufficient for him to decide to remain among them. He was probably also aware of the incompatibility of their principles with his. In 1696, Keith left the Harp Lane meeting and established a new separatist congregation at Turners' Hall in Philpot Lane, Fenchurch Street. Some referred to the members of this meeting as 'reformed Quakers', although they seem to have preferred the term, 'Friends of Truth' themselves.[166] Both terms indicate that their worship resembled that of Friends. In The Dictionary of National Biography, it is claimed that Keith ministered baptism and the Lord's Supper here. This seems unlikely, as Keith did not receive the Lord's Supper himself until 1700. Also, it seems that he was already seeking favour with the Church of England at this point.[167] He might not have risked diminishing their opinion of him by ministering the sacraments before receiving ordination. However, it is likely that prepared sermons, particularly by Keith himself, often replaced the usual Quaker practice of speaking only at the motion of the Spirit.

In addition to worshipping at Turners' Hall, Keith used it as a venue to make public attacks upon Friends. Between June

---

[166] 'Trepidantium Malleus', A Reprimand for the Author, London, 1697, pp.3-4. 'Trepidantium Malleus' was a pseudonym used by Presbyterian, Samuel Young; An Abstract by way of an Index, London, 1699, p.15. This was 'given forth by some Friends of the Truth, belonging to the Meeting at Turner's-Hall'.

[167] 'W.C.', Mr. George Keith at Turners-Hall...Contradicting Mr. George Keith at the Tolbooth of Aberdeen, London, 1696, p.4. 'W.C.' calls himself 'a moderate churchman'.

1696 and June 1701, he held five public meetings to expose the errors in Friends' works.[168] On each occasion he would publish an advertisement, requesting the attendance of particular Friends to hear themselves charged and found guilty of gross errors.[169] Friends were outraged. This was a man whom they had disowned and who, until 1700, had not affiliated himself with any recognised denomination. They felt no obligation to answer his 'peremptory summons'. Even some non-Quakers felt the same. 'Vale' demanded, 'pray inform me what this desperate virago, this busy and officious agent is' and surmised that the tendency and end of his work 'is neither just nor Christian'.[170] On each occasion, Friends would publish the reasons for their non-attendance so that members of the public would not take their absence as an admission of guilt.[171]

Although the summoned Friends refused to attend, the meetings took place anyway. Few Friends were present but other members of the public attended in droves. This was the seventeenth-century equivalent of watching a confrontational talk show. In front of his audience, Keith would make his

---

[168] The dates of these meetings were 11 June 1696, 29 April 1697, 21 April 1698, 11, 18 and 23 January 1700 and 4 June 1701.
[169] For example, George Keith, An Advertisement of an Intended Meeting, n.p., 1697.
[170] 'Vale', A Letter on George Keith's Advertisement, London, 1697, pp.5-6. 'Vale' appears to be an Anglican. He had previously objected to Keith's 1696 Advertisement of a Meeting in 'Vale', Remarks upon an Advertisement, n.p., n.d., pp.1ff.
[171] Friends' replies to Keith's advertisements included, Thomas Story and Benjamin Bealing, Reasons why those of the Quakers Challenged by George Keith...Refuse their Appearance, London, 1696, broadside; John Penington, Reflections upon George Keith's Late Advertisement, London, 1696; T[homas] Storey, A Word to the Wise, n.p., [1697]; T[homas] Story, A Word to the Well-Inclined, London, 1698; Joseph Wyeth, To All who are Advertised by G. Keith of a Meeting, London, 1699; Daniel Phillips, To All who shall be Inclined by G.K.'s Advertisement, n.p., [1701].

accusations of unsound doctrine against Friends, citing numerous passages from their works as evidence. So that his accusations would reach a wider audience, Keith published a detailed account of each of these meetings.[172] Confident that they would sell well, the booksellers paid for the printing of the narratives and gave Keith fifty copies to sell himself, thereby relieving him of the financial difficulty that he was experiencing in printing against Friends.[173] So successful did Keith consider these public meetings that he used the same method against Friends in other parts of the country, notably Bristol on 24 July 1699 and 14 August 1700, when Friends once again refused to attend.[174]

Public Opinion of Keith

It will be argued that public opinion favoured Keith at this time. Keith's meetings to accuse Friends, and his published accounts of the proceedings, attracted much public attention. The newsletters reported on the Turners' Hall meetings. Kirby's investigation of these has revealed that only one newsletter, Leach's London Newsletter, was hostile towards Keith rather than Friends.[175] According to 'W.C.' writing in 1696, the Keithian Controversy was the talk of London:

---

[172] Keith, An Exact Narrative; Keith, A Second Narrative; George Keith, A Third Narrative, London, 1698; Keith, George Keith's Fourth Narrative; George Keith, George Keith's Fifth Narrative, London, 1701.
[173] Keith, A Second Narrative, p.5.
[174] Benjamin Coole, Sophistry Detected, Bristol, 1699, pp.37-45; George Keith, Bristol Quakerism Expos'd, London, 1700, p.32; George Keith, A Narrative of the Proceedings…at Coopers-hall, London, 1700; B[enjamin] Coole, Honesty the Truest Policy, n.p., 1700, p.97.
[175] Kirby, George Keith, p.106.

> Mr. Keith, The controversy between you and the Quakers of late years hath made such a noise, not only in America…but also in these parts of Europe, that he who in this popular city hath heard nothing of it, must likewise have been banished from human society. It hath been not only the discourse of porters and carmen over a pot of ale, and sparks and beaus over a glass of wine. But also the grave cit. over a dish of coffee hath mixt his observations upon state affairs with his reflections upon the Quakers' differences: Nay, moreover, the reverend clergy of the Church of England (not to mention the Non Cons) have been sometimes pleased to take notice of them in the pulpit…[176]

Keith received the approval of most of Friends' opponents. In addition to the increasing interest of the Church of England, Keith was also keenly supported by Presbyterian, Samuel Young, who wrote in Keith's favour under the pseudonym, 'Trepidantium Malleus'. However, some members of the public were less impressed. Some believed Keith's accusations were unjustified, such as Anglican Edmund Elys, who sometimes succeeded in defending the Quaker position more ably than Friends did themselves:

> The people called Quakers plainly and expressly declare that by the light within they understand Jesus Christ himself, and all that comes from him, tending to the conviction and conversion of sinners. Now since the light within is the only true and eternal Son of the only true and eternal God…is it not a kind of blasphemy to say that

---

[176] 'W.C.', Mr. George Keith at Turners-Hall, p.2.

> the light within is not sufficient without something else?[177]

Others, such as 'Vale', disapproved of Keith because he failed to reveal his religious affiliation. 'W.C.' expressed similar concerns, calling Keith:

> a mongrel between Presbyterian and Quaker, a sort of amphibious animal that is neither fish, flesh, nor good herring; an hermaphrodite in religion.[178]

However, Elys, 'Vale' and 'W.C.' were in the minority. Whilst he remained an apostate Quaker, public opinion undoubtedly favoured Keith.

Keith's Changing Theological Position

Keith's changing doctrinal position will be traced and it will be seen that by the time Keith entered the Church of England he had renounced the authority of the inner light and the principles of Quakerism. Instead he recognised the authority of Scripture and the outward ordinances of the Anglican Church.

It is difficult to pin-point the moment that Keith ceased to regard himself as a Friend or that he decided to join the Church of England. The title of his 1696 An Exact Narrative refers to 'disputes and speeches there between G. Keith and other Quakers, differing from him in some religious principles'. He also claims that he does not charge the generality or

---

[177] Edmund Elys, George Keith his Saying that the Light Within is not Sufficient to Salvation, London, 1697, pp.1-2.
[178] 'W.C.', Mr. Keith No Presbyterian, Nor Quaker; But George the Apostate, London, 1696, p.16.

universality of Friends with doctrinal errors.[179] This indicates that he still regarded himself as a Friend in 1696. In 1697, however, it became clear that Keith was definitely moving towards a more mainstream Christian position.

He published, George Keith's Explications of Divers Passages, which contained explanations, amendments, corrections and retractions of various passages relating to doctrine in his former works.[180] On the whole, he retracted very little. For the most part, he reinterpreted his former statements to make them appear to agree with his current theology, the insincerity of which John Penington was quick to argue.[181] However, Keith now asserted in strong terms the necessity of water-baptism and the Lord's Supper:

> It hath pleased God to give me to see that the spring and rise of that great opposition that hath been and is in many against these outward practices has been and is a secret prejudice against the doctrine of Christ crucified, and the mysterious working of an antichristian and diabolical spirit, designing to draw men from name and thing of Christianity, to paganism and deism, and at the next step to idolatry and atheism.[182]

A year later, Keith even went so far as to declare the Lord's Supper to be 'a means of Grace'.[183]

---

[179] Keith, An Exact Narrative, [title page], [preface].
[180] George Keith, George Keith's Explications of Divers Passages, London, 1697, p.1.
[181] John Penington, The Fig-leaf Covering Discovered, London, 1697, pp.7ff.
[182] Keith, George Keith's Explications, pp.30-31.
[183] George Keith, The Arguments of the Quakers...and my own, against Baptism and the Supper Examined, London, 1698, p.89.

This shows how far Keith had come from his earlier position. As late as 1694, he had not been recommending the practice of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, although he was willing to allow those who felt moved to perform them to do this.[184] Keith did not join the Church of England at this point. However, he did make further efforts to ingratiate himself with the Anglican Church. Evidently impressed with Keith's work in publicly humiliating Quakers, from 1698 Henry Compton, Bishop of London, appointed Anglican ministers to assist Keith at the Turners' Hall meetings by checking his references in Friends' books and attesting to the veracity of these proofs of doctrinal errors.[185] It was also in 1698 that Keith finally admitted that he was no longer a Quaker:

> Though your excommunication was unjust, yet it was full time for me to depart out of your Babylon; and I rejoice and thank God that I am come out from it.[186]

In this year, Keith also published A Christian Catechism. This catechism was based upon the articles of the Apostles' Creed and Keith appended copies of the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.[187]

By this point, it was evident to observers that Keith would soon be joining a church in which he could participate in the sacraments. 'Calvin Philanax' wrote, 'I know you are convinced water-baptism is an ordinance of Christ and desire it

---

[184] Keith, Truth Advanced, p.180.
[185] Keith, A Third Narrative, [title page].
[186] Keith, A Third Narrative, p.50.
[187] George Keith, A Christian Catechism, London, 1698, pp.1-110.

for your friends and children'.[188] However, Keith remained at Turners' Hall for another year, although it was clear from early 1699 that he would almost certainly join the Church of England. It was at this point that the newly-formed Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge approached Keith to help in the work of reclaiming dissenters to the Church of England. Soon, under the patronage of the S.P.C.K., Keith was pursuing his favourite activities of printing against Friends and travelling around the country publicly challenging their doctrine. Keith's travels took him to such places as Colchester and Bristol.[189] It was also in 1699 that Keith wrote one of his most damning attacks upon Friends. In The Deism of William Penn, Keith argues that Friends are guilty of deism because they recognise the inner light rather than the Scriptures as the general rule of faith and life.[190]

George Keith Joins the Church of England

Keith's motives for joining the Anglican Church were not entirely theological and he attracted much criticism from non-Anglican members of the public for conforming to the Church of England. Keith's attacks upon Friends became increasingly

---

[188] 'Calvin Philanax', A Friendly Epistle to Mr. George Keith, London, 1698, p.33. 'Calvin Philanax' is thought to be another pseudonym used by Samuel Young.

[189] The accounts of Keith's attempts in Bristol to hold similar meetings to those at Turners' Hall are cited above. Accounts of Keith's debates with Thomas Upsher and other Friends in Colchester in 1699 and 1701 are given in George Keith, A True Relation of a Conference, London, 1699, pp.1-16; [George Keith], An Account of an Occasional Conference, London, 1701, pp.1-8; Thomas Upsher, An Answer to..An Account of an Occasional Conference, London, 1701, pp.3-21.

[190] George Keith, The Deism of William Penn, London, 1699, [title page].

virulent and his charges farfetched. Although some of Keith's supporters followed him into the Anglican church, he had little success thereafter in attracting Quaker converts to Anglicanism.

Keith's Choice

It will be demonstrated that Keith joined the Church of England rather than one of the nonconformist groups for a variety of reasons, including the stipend. However, the main reason for his choice was the fact that the Anglican Church welcomed him.

Keith finally received the Lord's Supper in February 1700. His youngest daughter was baptised at the same time, an elder daughter having been baptised over a year earlier.[191] Keith was not baptised himself because he had been baptised as an infant in the Church of Scotland. Keith left his Turners' Hall congregation in May 1700, preaching his last sermon there on 5 May, and he was ordained deacon of the Church of England probably within the next few days.[192] He was ordained priest in 1702. By the time that he received the Lord's Supper for the first time, Keith had been travelling for a year as an agent of the S.P.C.K., promoting Anglicanism and even defending infant baptism.[193] It is difficult to determine why he waited so long

---

[191] Keith, George Keith's Fourth Narrative, pp.112-113.
[192] Keith's last sermon at Turners' Hall and his first at St. George, Botolph Lane, were printed: George Keith, A Sermon Preach'd...5th of May 1700, 2nd edn., London, 1700 and George Keith, Two Sermons Preach'd..May the 12th 1700, London, 1700, the latter 'being his first preaching after ordination'.
[193] [Keith], An Account of an Occasional Conference, p.8.

after starting work with the S.P.C.K. before he joined the church that he was promoting. Perhaps he was reluctant to give up the autonomy that he enjoyed at Turners' Hall. The fact that he did not leave Turners' Hall until he was ordained, may indicate that he was not prepared to give up his position as the leader of a congregation until he was assured of a position of respect in the Church of England.

Contemporaries were uncertain why Keith chose to join the Church of England. Benjamin Coole believed that it was because, despite travelling far and wide, Keith had been frustrated in his ambition to gather a sect:

> He fell from us and set up for himself, and tried Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Colchester, Bristol, Wiltshire and Berkshire, as well as London, and finding all his endeavours would not take to gather a sect, he then making a virtue of necessity, gets into the Church of England.[194]

Others suggested that Keith chose the Anglican Church for the stipend.[195]

There was probably some truth in both suggestions. Keith had not been able to remain among Friends because his theological position had changed. In particular, he now subjugated the authority of the inner light to that of the Bible. However, he had also left Friends because his ambitions had been frustrated. He may not have desired to replace Fox as

---

[194] Coole, Honesty the Truest Policy, p.81.
[195] George Keith's Complaint Against the Quakers, London, 1700, p.2.

the most pre-eminent of Friends, as some argued.[196] However, his attempts to reform Quakerism had been shunned and he had been disowned. Keith was a natural leader who could not bear to be side-lined. As an ex-Quaker, he must have known that he could never reach a position of great prominence in the Church of England. However, Keith probably came to realise that his ambitions for leadership would be more fully realised within the Church of England than they would have been if he had remained the leader of a dwindling separatist congregation of indefinable religious affiliation. In the Church of England, he would meet leading divines, gain prominence through his work with the S.P.C.K. and, later, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He would enjoy the respect of his parishioners, a position of respect in the community as a minister and, of course, a stipend to support him in his old age.

Keith probably could have chosen to join one of the dissenting congregations instead of the Anglican Church. A return to the Church of Scotland might have made theological sense. However, Keith had renounced that church in the past. To return would have required him to eat humble pie and that was not a dish that Keith could stomach. Keith would have found the increasing presence of Unitarian thinking among English Presbyterians as unattractive as Quakerism. However, he may have felt at home among the Independents. Perhaps he could have joined the Baptists. It is, after all, very hard to believe that Keith genuinely accepted the validity of infant baptism, since there was no Scriptural justification for it. As such a keen

---

[196] John Pennington, Keith Against Keith, London, 1696, p.152.

proponent of Scriptural authority, Keith must have violated his principles when he performed infant baptism as an Anglican minister. However, a significant reason for Keith's joining the Church of England, rather than any other Protestant church, was that it welcomed him.

The Toleration Act had removed the legal obligation to attend Anglican worship. The resulting fall in attendance had left the church in need of people who could win members back. Keith appeared to have the talents to do this. Furthermore, Richard Clark has argued that Anglicans were unwilling themselves to engage in religious dispute with dissenters, largely because many of them had still not reconciled themselves to the reality of 'an England of many Christianities'. They preferred to leave the management of their cause to Keith, Leslie and Bugg.[197] Therefore, the Anglican Church offered Keith the money he needed to print against his enemies and to travel around the country harassing them. This was too appealing a prospect for Keith to turn down.

Public Reaction

When Keith joined the Church of England, the tide of public opinion turned against him. Presumably, he maintained the support of Anglicans, the largest section of society. However, those of other persuasions turned on him. Immediately after

---

[197] Clark, '"The Gangreen of Quakerism": An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution', JRH, 11 (1981), pp.404-429.

Keith joined the Anglican Church, there was a flurry of pamphleteering. More pamphlets relating to the Keithian Controversy were published during 1700 than during any other year of the division. Many of these were written by anonymous observers. Some of these works were anti-Quaker, such as Mr. George Keith's Reasons for Renouncing Quakerism, in which an anonymous author purporting to be Keith rehearses Keith's arguments against Friends, and does so much more succinctly than Keith ever did himself.[198]

However, many more of these pamphlets were anti-Keithian. Some poked fun at him, such as the writer who pointed out that Keith had changed his religious affiliation a number of times but claimed not to contradict himself, nor to have changed in fundamentals.[199] Others insulted him. One asserted that Keith was the personification of envy.[200] Keith was also attacked for the abandonment of his principles and his own former arguments were turned back upon him. One author quoted Keith's earlier attacks upon the very notion of a national church which Keith had argued, 'is always a persecuting church (it is her very nature) so it must always be exceeding hypocritical', and its teachers who:

> have been generally and for the most part self-seeking, worldly-minded and covetous men, who loved pleasures and riches more than men.[201]

---

[198] Mr. George Keith's Reasons for Renouncing Quakerism, London, 1700, pp.14-32.
[199] One Wonder More, n.p., n.d. The content reveals that this was written c.1700. The author calls himself, 'a Protestant Dissenter'.
[200] Phthonography, London, 1700, broadside.
[201] George Keith, The Way Cast Up, n.p., 1677, pp.38, 40-41, quoted in Mr. George Keith's Account of a National Church, London, 1700, p.3.

Samuel Young was genuinely appalled at Keith's desertion of his former principles in embracing a church which used symbols and set-form prayers. He expresses his fear that Keith may have left a church which neglects the Christ without for one that neglects the Christ within and calls Keith, 'my old friend, but new enemy'.[202]

The Final Years of the Controversy

It will be seen that the pamphlets Keith published against Friends after he joined the Church of England were characterised by even greater bitterness than his earlier attacks. They contained ridiculous accusations and calls for the suppression of Quakerism. They also demonstrated how far Keith had departed from his former principles.

One of Keith's most significant works of this period was The Standard of the Quakers Examined. This is a lengthy refutation of his friend and protégé, Robert Barclay's, Apology. Apology was the most important elucidation of Quaker theology and Keith worked his way through the book denouncing every element, in order to 'refute the whole system of their principles'. Not wishing this to appear as a gross betrayal of his friend's memory, Keith had the audacity to assert:

> I thought I could not perform a better and more friendly office to his memory, than to do what in me lies to prevent the hurt that his Apology may do in the world, by

---

[202] 'Trepidantium Malleus', A Snake in the Grass Caught and Crusht, London, 1700, pp.7, 10, 15, 17.

> this my friendly and fair examination and refutation of it.[203]

Upon joining the Church of England, Keith's anti-Quaker pamphlets also became yet more virulent and the charges therein increasingly farfetched. In An Account of the Quakers Politicks, Keith encourages the suppression of Friends, urging all Christians 'to use their utmost endeavours by all lawful ways and means to oppose the spreading of this gangrene'.[204] In his broadside, A Serious Call, Keith asks all good Christians to keep this sheet in their homes to 'show the poor deluded Quakers their errors' whenever opportunity arises.[205]

Eventually, Keith resorted to accusing Friends of magic. He claimed that Friends in unity with each other experienced a pleasant efflux or effluvium going from one to another but that the efflux from a Friend of an opposite spirit would wound them and it would feel as if pins and needles had penetrated their hearts and vital organs.[206] Keith claimed that he accused Friends only of natural, animal magic, rather than demoniacal, diabolical magic. However, this was clearly untrue as he claimed that a minister may be poisoned to death by the poisonous efflux of a Friend and argued that this was a form of witchcraft albeit

---

[203] George Keith, The Standard of the Quakers Examined, London, 1702, [preface].
[204] George Keith, An Account of the Quakers Politicks, London, 1700, p.17.
[205] [George Keith], A Serious Call to the Quakers, London, 1700, broadside. This was reprinted a number of times and widely distributed by Keith and other Anglicans both in England and America.
[206] George Keith, The Magick of Quakerism, London, 1707, p.36.

unintentional.[207] Whitehead was quick to point out this ridiculous charge. Whitehead had the last word as, with the exception of Keith's will, this answer to Keith was the final pamphlet of the Keithian Controversy.[208]

These examples of Keith's works from this period show just how far Keith's position had changed. His detailed refutation of Apology, the author of which he claimed to have influenced, shows that Keith now rejected everything that he had stood for while he was a Friend. His malicious charges against Friends and his calls for their suppression reveal deep personal hatred towards them. Such was his resentment of their rejection of him that he would be satisfied with nothing less than their destruction.

Keith's Success in America

It will be seen that Keith had little success in converting American Friends to Anglicanism. Even the majority of his former supporters refused to abandon their belief in the inner light.

As an Anglican, Keith also continued his attacks upon Friends in person. He travelled extensively, disturbing Friends in their meetings and accusing them of heretical doctrine. From 1702 to 1704, as an agent of the S.P.G., he performed this work

---

[207] George Keith, The Magick of Quakerism Confirmed, London, 1711, pp.4, 18.
[208] George Whitehead, Light and Truth Triumphant, London, 1712, pp.12-13.

in America. Friends in the American provinces resisted Keith in much the same way that English Friends had done, refusing on most occasions to enter into public debates with him.[209] The division among Friends in Pennsylvania and neighbouring provinces had not been resolved since Keith's return to London. For example, Caleb Pusey and Keithian, Daniel Leeds, had been opposing each other in print.[210] Some of the Keithian separatist meetings in New Jersey and Pennsylvania still survived at this point, although their numbers had been depleted by those who had returned to Friends or joined other Christian denominations.

Keith persuaded some members of the Keithian meetings to join the Anglican Church and he had apparently baptised twenty-two by the end of February 1703. However, the vast majority refused to leave their meetings and even John McComb would have nothing to do with Keith.[211] It is interesting that Keith was not very successful in converting his erstwhile supporters. This may be further evidence that the cause of division among Friends in Pennsylvania went beyond religious differences. Clearly, these people still regarded themselves as Friends and they probably felt that Keith had betrayed them and their principles in joining the Church of England.

In the early 1690s in America, Keith had failed to convince the majority of Friends to adopt his proposed reforms.

---

[209] For an account of Keith's work with the S.P.G. in America, see Kirby, George Keith, pp.125-147.
[210] The pamphlets exchanged included Daniel Leeds, News of a Trumpet Sounding, New York, 1697, which was answered by Caleb Pusey, Satan's Harbinger Encountered, Philadelphia, 1700.
[211] Kirby, George Keith, pp.139-140.

However, he had succeeded in establishing separate meetings of those Friends who did embrace his ideas; Friends who valued the physical Christ and who recognised the authority of both the inner light and Scripture. Despite his return to England, many of those meetings had survived. However, when he tried to persuade them to move beyond this more formalised version of Quakerism to embrace Anglicanism, the majority refused. They would forsake their former leader rather than abandon their inner light.

.

Keith's Success in England

Although Keith never ceased trying to convince Friends of their doctrinal errors, it will be seen that he was equally unsuccessful in converting English Friends to the Church of England.

Keith continued to harass Friends after his return to England. In 1705, he became Rector of the parish of Edburton, Sussex, so it was Friends in that area who experienced the greatest disruption at his hands. He interrupted their worship and held public meetings to read alleged errors from Friends' printed works.[212] Keith also travelled to other areas, including the West Country.[213] Keith caused disturbance but there is no evidence that, as an Anglican minister, he had any success in converting Friends. However, some of Keith's supporters had

---

[212] John Snashall et al., True News out of Sussex, London, 1707, pp.2-3.
[213] Thomas Gwin, A Letter to a Friend of the Danger of Apostacy, London, 1706, [p.1].

followed him when he joined the Church of England.

It is not clear how many converted to Anglicanism, although it is likely that members of his Turners' Hall congregation were among those who did. John Field claimed that no more than four or five Friends who had been in unity with the main body of Friends when Keith returned to England followed him into the Church of England.[214] Keith, however, estimated that over 120, excluding those in Pennsylvania, did so during the twelve months after he joined the Church of England. However, he did admit that they were mostly Wilkinson-Story separatists or, as he described them, 'the truest Quakers to their professed principle of the light within, against George Fox's innovations and new orders'.[215]

Keith's most notable convert was Robert Bridgman. He had been a respected London Friend with responsibility for collecting and administering funds for poor relief. He also appears to have opposed Keith initially. The authors of a 1695 pro-Keith pamphlet describe Bridgman as, 'of the same stamp with his brethren in Pennsylvania, or at least-wise a cloaker of those gross errors'. They refer to Bridgman's Folly and Envy Detected, which was a reply to one of Keith's supporters.[216]

---

[214] John Feild, The Weakness of George Keith's Reasons, London, 1700, p.19.
[215] George Keith, A Plain Discovery of Many Gross Falshoods, London, 1701, p.37. Richard Clark claims that Keith claimed to have converted 500 Friends to Anglicanism. However, he does not say where Keith made this claim: Clark, '"The Gangreen of Quakerism": An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution', JRH, 11 (1981), pp.404-429.
[216] 'G.C.' and 'E.N.', Envy and Folly Detected, London, 1695, pp.[1], 3; R[obert] B[ridgman], Folly and Envy Detected, London, 1694, p.4.

Bridgman moved to Huntingdonshire in about 1698 and was evidently won over to Keith's point of view during Keith's visit to the area around that time.

In September 1699, the Huntingdonshire Quarterly Meeting heard that Bridgman had not been attending Meetings for Worship. He explained that his non-attendance was due to:

> the dissatisfaction he hath had and still hath with sundry errors delivered in public, and offers to prove it out of our Friends' books.

Some Friends were appointed to speak with those who were accused of delivering unsound doctrine in meetings. They also met with Bridgman and heard him read his quotations of errors from Friends' books. They failed to give a judgement on the matter but sent a copy of the quotations to the Morning Meeting in London.[217] The minutes fail to mention what reply they received. Bridgman was still attending Monthly Meetings and participating in their business until some point between February and April 1700 and no mention is made of his or any other members' separation from Friends.[218] However, in his Journal, James Dickenson mentions that while he was in Huntingdonshire in about 1699, he 'met with great exercise with some apostates who had run out with George Keith'.[219]

Keith claimed that ten Friends from Huntingdon and Godmanchester joined the Anglican Church and also some from

---

[217] Huntingdonshire QM Minutes, Vol.1, [from the back fos.4-2], minutes for 5 September and 5 December 1699.
[218] Huntingdon MM Minutes, minutes for 6 February and 2 April 1700.
[219] James Dickenson, A Journal of the Life...of...James Dickenson, London, 1745, p.126. This was published posthumously.

Cambridge, including William Mather and his wife.[220] Both Bridgman and Mather published their reasons for renouncing Quakerism. Both men cite Friends' unsound doctrine as their reason for leaving Friends and joining the Church of England.[221] It appears therefore that Keith had succeeded in convincing some Friends that their emphasis upon the inner light had led them to embrace unsound doctrine. However, the number of Keith's converts was not great. He had failed to reform the Society of Friends from within. He had failed to gain enough supporters to found a new religious society. He had also failed to draw off more than one or two notable members of the Society of Friends.

Conclusion

The Keithian Controversy does not appear to have had any lasting impact upon the Society of Friends. There was no significant numerical loss of Friends to Anglicanism. Considering that there were probably around 50,000 Friends in Britain at the end of the seventeenth century, even if Keith's estimation of 120 converts is accepted, this was not a significant depletion of Quaker numbers. Keith's criticisms did prompt the Morning Meeting to undertake a detailed inspection of the works of 'ancient Friends'. However, the Meeting was not examining these works for doctrinal errors. The aim instead was to gather authoritative statements on a range of subjects in order 'to clear Friends from the calumnies that are cast upon

---

[220] Keith, George Keith's Fourth Narrative, pp.112-113.
[221] Robert Bridgman, Some Reasons why Robert Bridgman and his Wife, London, 1700, pp.5-6; William Mather, A Vindication of William Mather and his Wife, London, 1701, pp.53-58.

them'. Thus Friends gathered passages relating to all aspects of doctrine, arranged under thirteen headings.[222] This must have been a very useful resource in their defence against the attacks of anti-Quaker writers. In this respect, leading Friends actually gained something from Keith's attacks.

Keith died in March 1716. Although a few Keithian separatists may have remained in America at this time, the controversy essentially died with him. The Keithian Controversy had lasted for over twenty years and had caused a great deal of embarrassment to the Society of Friends. Keith had made accusations of serious doctrinal errors and provided new ammunition for anti-Quaker writers. Friends struggled to counteract Keith's charges because they were both unwilling and unable to retract the words of George Fox and other revered early Friends. However, Friends weathered the storm.

Keith's charges were old charges; the same charges that Friends' opponents had been making against them, and that Friends had been answering, since their early days. In the late seventeenth century, Friends were better placed than before to defend themselves against those charges. The attitude of the English public towards them had changed. The fear of Friends, which had characterised public opinion of them in their early years, had dissipated and they were now known to be a peaceful people who did not pose a real political threat. Clearly the English public did not believe that Friends were dangerous

---

[222] Morning Meeting Minutes, Vol.2, fos.149-152, minutes for 30 November and 3 December 1696.

heretics and Friends were not subjected to renewed persecution. Friends also reassured the public and the authorities by publishing Scripturally based explanations of their belief.[223]

Friends also possessed the organisational institutions to enable them to counteract Keith's challenge. Such was the authority of the London Yearly Meeting and the other central bodies in London, that no Friend could successfully introduce changes to the Society of Friends without the approval of these meetings, even if that Friend tried to introduce these reforms outside England. Keith's proposed reforms were rejected by these bodies. The Morning Meeting led the way in ensuring that each of Keith's numerous pamphlets against Friends received at least one answer and the system of business meetings saw to it that Friends everywhere knew that Keith was an apostate who was not to be countenanced. In this way, Friends ensured that Keith would find little support among Friends and few would join the separation.

Although Keith charged Friends with serious doctrinal errors, these were errors according to his own restrictive definition of Christian doctrine; a definition which changed as his own theological position changed. In reality, the difference

---

[223] In 1698, for example, The Christianity of the People was republished. To counteract Keith's charges, this edition included an additional section asserting Friends' belief in resurrection from the dead, eternal judgement and the immortality of the soul: The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted Against the Unjust Charge, London, 1698, pp.15-16. This pamphlet should not be confused with The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted, Being a Brief Account, n.p., 1696, which was issued by Scottish Friends. This also dealt with the points of faith questioned by Keith.

between the faith of Friends and other Protestants was largely one of emphasis. Whereas other Christians preached predominantly about the life of Christ, Friends in their preaching emphasised the inner light, because the central experience of that light was of such immediacy to them and because they believed that other Christians neglected this light. However, the vast majority of Friends did not deny the humanity of Christ or his physical death and sufferings. Whereas other Christians believed the Bible to be the rule of faith and life, Friends subjugated the authority of the Bible to that of the Spirit. However, they did not renounce the authority or teachings of the Scriptures.

Because of their belief in the freedom of the inner light to guide the individual, Friends did have a less clearly defined faith than that of other Christian denominations. They were not prepared to force the consciences of members concerning the specifics of belief. Keith's charges that Friends did not believe in a physical Second Coming or a physical resurrection of the dead were probably true of a number of Friends. However, Friends felt no desire to enforce conformity over such issues. To ensure their survival, Friends accepted the necessity of presenting a statement of their faith to satisfy the public. However, they would never restrict the immediate guidance of the light by imposing a written creed upon members. Keith's intention had been to reform the Society of Friends. In fact, his ideas would have the destroyed the essence of Quakerism. He failed because Friends would never allow this to happen.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERNAL CONTROVERSIES OF OTHER NONCONFORMIST GROUPS AND COMPARISONS WITH QUAKER CONTROVERSY

Introduction

The Society of Friends was not the only nonconformist group to experience internal controversies and divisions after the Restoration. Other groups experienced similar problems. As sociologists have argued, there is a natural tendency to internal division among sects. Bryan Wilson has observed that such schisms are often prompted by organisational differences or by the question of purity of doctrine.[1] When groups reject traditional sources of authority, differences tend to arise as members seek a new source of authority to fill the resulting void. It will be seen that this was largely true of the nonconformist groups of seventeenth-century England. As they sought to replace the authority of the Church of England with that of the Bible or the Holy Spirit, they did indeed experience internal disagreements about organisation, belief and practice.

This chapter will examine the internal differences faced by the Particular Baptists, General Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians and Muggletonians and will compare the experiences of these groups with those of the Society of Friends. It will be argued that the nature of a group's

---

[1] Bryan R. Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', in Bryan R. Wilson, ed., Patterns of Sectarianism, p.36.

organisational structure and centre of spiritual authority determined its susceptibility to internal controversy as well as its ability to overcome such divisions. These factors also affected a group's tendency to numerical decline or to reduced spiritual fervour. It will be argued that, despite Friends' belief in the freedom of the inner light, the organisational structure of the Society of Friends was more hierarchical and authoritarian than that of less radical nonconformist groups.

It will also be seen that the post-Restoration period posed certain challenges to all of these nonconformist groups, which made them more prone to internal disputes. The changing political situation, persecution and the diminution of eschatological expectation forced them to consider their long-term future and identity; to make decisions about their doctrinal position, church practice and organisation.[2] They needed to develop a sense of group identity in order to survive the tribulations of this period. However, the decision-making process inherent in this development resulted in internal disagreements. The growth of group consciousness also heightened tensions between the different nonconformist groups.

Background

The post-Restoration period was a challenging time for Dissenters, a time of great uncertainty as hopes of toleration

---

[2] Apart from where it appears in quotations, the term, 'church', will be used throughout this chapter only to refer to a sect as a whole, rather than to an individual congregation.

were alternately raised and dashed according to the changing political situation. Before examining the development of the nonconformist groups and the ensuing internal controversies, it is necessary to provide some background to that development by outlining those political events of this period which most affected the Dissenters.

The Restoration of Charles II was not immediately devastating to nonconformists. Charles's Declaration of Breda of 4 April 1660 promised 'a liberty to tender consciences', thereby raising hopes of toleration for nonconformists. Charles also raised Presbyterian hopes of comprehension, particularly with the Worcester House Declaration of 25 October. However, the first bitter disappointment to nonconformists followed swiftly. The resurgence of religious conservatism which accompanied the nobility and gentry's return to political power resulted not only in the Cavalier Parliament's refusal to endorse the Declaration of Breda but also in the reinstatement of Anglicanism at all levels.[3] In 1662 this was enforced by the Act of Uniformity which required the clergy's 'assent and consent' to the entire Prayer Book; something to which nonconformists could never agree.[4] Thus, between 1660 and 1662, Presbyterians, Independents and the handful of Baptists who had held livings in the pre-Restoration church either left or were ejected.

---

[3] R.A. Beddard, 'The Restoration Church' in J.R. Jones, ed., The Restored Monarchy, 1660-1688, London, 1979, p.163.
[4] For a good explanation of the terms of the Act of Uniformity that Presbyterians and Independents found unacceptable, see C.G. Bolam and Jeremy Goring, in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, pp.81-82.

Furthermore, fears that Dissenters were plotting against the restored government were confirmed by the Fifth Monarchist Rising of 1661, thus initiating the wave of Parliamentary legislation against nonconformists, known as the Clarendon Code.[5] As R.A. Beddard explains:

> After Venner's desperate Fifth Monarchy insurrection, in January 1661, few disputed the Cavaliers' axiom that religious dissent and political subversion were indistinguishable; soon it was to be elevated to the status of a legislative principle.[6]

The onset of the persecution of the godly also led to a gradual diminution of eschatological expectation among nonconformists. Abandonment of millennial hopes was not essential to the development of group consciousness. Such hopes endured even among some nonconformist leaders, including the Particular Baptist, Hanserd Knollys, who continued to publish millenarian works into the late 1680s.[7] It will also be argued below that group consciousness began to develop within some nonconformist groups even before the Restoration. However, the frustration of hopes of toleration or comprehension, the heightening of persecution and the reduction of millennial expectation during the early 1660s, accelerated the development of denominational awareness. Nonconformists were now forced to look to their long-term future as Dissenting groups; their identity and their survival.

---

[5] For a description of the Vennerite insurrection, see Richard L. Greaves, Deliver us From Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660-1663, Oxford, 1986, pp.49-56.
[6] Beddard, 'The Restoration Church' in Jones, ed., The Restored Monarchy, pp.163-164.
[7] Bernard S. Capp, The Fifth-Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism, London, 1972, p.225.

The ejections and persecution of the early 1660s directly resulted in internal disagreements within some nonconformist groups. The disagreement between the Presbyterian 'Dons' and 'Ducklings' is discussed below. As R. Tudur Jones has noted, there was some disagreement among the Independents concerning complete separation from the Established Church. Some argued that it was permissible to hear sermons in parish churches or even to practise occasional conformity in order to qualify for public office. However, the majority of Independents disagreed with this opinion.[8] General Baptists disagreed over whether or not it was Scripturally justifiable to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. Jeremiah Ives, Henry Denne and Theophilus Brabourne all wrote in justification of swearing oaths.[9] However, Henry Adis and 'a small society of baptised believers undergoing the name of "free-willers", about the city of London', declared it unlawful. They quoted Jeremiah 23:10, 'for because of swearing, the land mourneth'.[10] Clearly Adis and his associates were not alone among Baptists in their opposition to oaths. A.C. Underwood notes that in 1660, in Bristol, Baptists refusing the Oath of Allegiance were reported

---

[8] R. Tudur Jones, Congregationalism in England, 1662-1962, Letchworth, 1962, pp.81-82. That this was still a point of contention during the early 1680s, perhaps due to the harsh persecution of the time, is demonstrated by the publication of The Lawfulness of Hearing the Publick Ministers of the Church of England, London, 1683. This contains reprints of Philip Nye and John Robinson's defences of hearing Anglican ministers' sermons.

[9] Jeremiah Ives, The Great Case of Conscience Opened, London, 1660; Henry Den, An Epistle Recommended to all the Prisons, London, 1660; Theophilus Brabourn, Of the Lawfnluess [sic] of the Oath of Allegiance, n.p., 1661.

[10] Henry Adis, A Fannaticks Mite Cast, London, 1660, p.73. Adis also published an answer to Ives, Denne, Brabourne and mixed communion Particular Baptist, John Tombes: Henry Adis, A Fannatick's Testimony Against Swearing, London, 1661.

as being both numerous and defiant and, in 1663, 214 Baptists and Quakers were imprisoned in Newgate for attending conventicles or refusing the oath. Adis himself was imprisoned in 1660.[11]

The late 1660s and 1670s were another time of change for nonconformists. There were periods of harsh persecution but this was also a time of growing confidence. By the end of the 1660s, magistrates in some areas had become more lenient in their attitude towards Dissenters. Presbyterians' hopes of comprehension and other nonconformists' hopes of toleration revived as the Conventicle Act expired in March 1669. However, when the episcopal returns of 1669 revealed that Dissent was much more prevalent than the government had believed, a Second Conventicle Act was passed. Not only were the penalties of the 1670 Act much more severe than those of the earlier Act, but they were enforced more stringently because the new Act imposed fines upon magistrates who failed to prosecute nonconformists.[12] The ensuing persecution was intense.

Fortunes changed again with Charles II's 1672 Declaration of Indulgence. Although they disapproved of this assertion of the royal prerogative, issued as the Indulgence was without Parliament's consent, many Dissenters were not prepared to turn down this relief from persecution. They duly registered their ministers and meeting-houses in accordance with the terms of the Declaration. According to C.G. Bolam and Jeremy Goring, 923

---

[11] A.C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, pp.91-92.
[12] Bolam and Goring in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, pp.87-88.

Presbyterians, 416 Independent and about 200 Baptist ministers were licensed.[13] John Ramsbottom has argued that the appearance of a Presbyterian meeting under the Indulgence, should not be seen as a sign of growing separatist sentiment.[14] At this point, the Presbyterians had not yet abandoned all hope of comprehension. In fact, willingness to register appears to have varied. For example, in Wiltshire, Presbyterians accounted for 46 out of 70 meeting-houses registered under the Indulgence. The rest consisted of eight Independent or Congregational and sixteen Baptist meeting-houses.[15] By contrast, in Bedfordshire only two out of 28 registered meeting-houses were described as Presbyterian. Two were Baptist and the remaining 24 were Congregational.[16] Many nonconformists, including Friends, did not register their ministers or meeting-houses because they refused to recognise the king's authority to sanction or prohibit religious worship, but they still benefited from the lull in persecution.

Fearing that the Indulgence would open the door to Roman Catholicism, Parliament forced Charles to cancel his Indulgence in March 1673. However, there was no great resurgence of persecution at this time and nonconformists do not appear to

---

[13] Bolam and Goring in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, pp.87-88. Watts gives slightly different figures but the proportions are roughly the same: Watts, Dissenters, p.248.
[14] John D. Ramsbottom, 'Presbyterians and "Partial Conformity" in the Restoration Church of England', JEH, 43 (1992), pp.249-270.
[15] J.H. Chandler, ed., Wiltshire Meeting House Certificates, Wiltshire Record Society, 40 (1984), pp.171-175.
[16] Edwin Welch, ed., Bedfordshire Chapels and Meeting Houses: Official Registration, 1672-1901, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 75 (1996), pp.17-181. Variations in the proportion of meeting-houses registered by the different denominations in different areas is probably also due to the varying strengths of the denominations in each area and perhaps also to the lack of clear distinctions between some Presbyterians and Independents.

have lost heart. Their growing confidence is demonstrated by the fact that they began to take a keener interest in political action as a means of reducing their sufferings. From around 1675, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Friends all endeavoured to support parliamentary candidates who had a favourable attitude towards nonconformists. Michael Watts notes that this was the beginning of nearly two centuries of Whig patronage of Dissent.[17]

The early 1680s were another time of great ups and downs for nonconformists, due in part to nonconformists' associations with the Earl of Shaftesbury and the country opposition in Parliament. The anxiety surrounding the 1679 Popish Plot resulted in the success of the opposition party in the parliamentary elections of that year.[18] Fear of the re-imposition of Roman Catholicism had led to a resurgence of the Dissenting interest. For nearly two years, the Whigs were dominant and nonconformists enjoyed a comparative lack of persecution. However, opposition in the Lords and frequent dissolutions of Parliament ensured that the Exclusion Bill failed. Charles was furious at nonconformist involvement in the attempt to exclude his brother, James, from the succession. As Watts explains:

> Whereas until 1673 it had been Parliament which had persecuted the Dissenters and the king who had tried to alleviate their sufferings, from 1679 onwards these roles were reversed.[19]

---

[17] Watts, Dissenters, pp.250-252.
[18] Watts, Dissenters, p.253.
[19] Watts, Dissenters, p.253.

Of course, Parliament could do nothing to alleviate nonconformist sufferings if it was dissolved and, from March 1681 until his death in February 1685, Charles II ruled without Parliament. Unprotected, Dissenters felt the full force of the wrath of Charles and his court. They were subjected to lengthy imprisonments, hefty fines and mob violence.[20]

From 1681 to 1686, nonconformists suffered the harshest persecution of the post-Restoration period. Charles's fury had little time to cool following the Exclusion Crisis before plots were hatched to assassinate both him and James. Some Dissenters were involved in the April 1683 Rye House Plot and still more supported the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion against James II in June 1685. Thus the severe persecution which began with the Exclusion Crisis continued relentlessly for around five years. As David Wykes has noted, many congregations were scattered by the intense persecution which followed the Exclusion Crisis and re-established their meetings only after James II had issued his Declaration of Indulgence in 1687.[21] Nonetheless, the nonconformists did survive this period. The group organisation that they had developed during the preceding decades held the churches together. Indeed, it will be argued below that those groups which had the most fully developed sense of denominational consciousness and the most unifying structure of organisation were best placed to survive the challenges of persecution.

---

[20] Watts, Dissenters, pp.254-255.
[21] David L. Wykes, '"The Settling of Meetings and the Preaching of the Gospel": The Development of the Dissenting Interest, 1690-1715', JURCHS, 5 (1992-1997), pp.127-145.

Relief came at last when the political situation changed yet again. This time, it was James II's desire to introduce toleration of Roman Catholics which brought about a change in Protestant nonconformist fortunes. Through his pardon of imprisoned Dissenters in March 1686 and his Declarations of Indulgence of 1687 and 1688, James sought to curry favour with nonconformists in the hope that they would unite with him against the persecuting state church. He was disappointed. In fact, James's pro-Catholic policy made Anglicans comparatively less wary of Protestant nonconformists. Consequently, as Watts explains:

> The luckless James II thus not only gave the Dissenters freedom of worship for the last two years of his reign, he broke the back of Anglican intolerance and made possible the permanent toleration of Dissent once William of Orange had landed at Torbay and James himself had fled to France.[22]

The Act of Toleration was something of a mixed blessing to nonconformists. For the Presbyterians, it was a disappointment. Toleration came at the expense of their final attempt to gain comprehension within the Established Church. They were forced to accept the separatist identity that the other nonconformist churches had embraced some decades earlier but which went against the Presbyterian parochial ecclesiology. However, in many respects, toleration was the fulfilment of nonconformist hopes. Although those who refused to pay tithes

---

[22] Watts, Dissenters, p.259.

could still expect to suffer severe financial penalties, persecution on other accounts was largely ended.[23] Of course, the freedom to worship publicly without interference was the greatest benefit of the Act. Wykes has asserted:

> As a result of the Act, Dissent was no longer confined to an illegal, twilight existence, but had at last the opportunity to develop and grow.[24]

Certainly, the nonconformists made the most of their newly acquired legality, as demonstrated by the flurry of meeting-house building which followed the passing of the Toleration Act. Nonconformists also found the confidence to seek greater freedoms, though not necessarily without bringing further problems upon themselves, as demonstrated by Friends' Affirmation Controversy, mentioned in the previous chapter.

However, whether nonconformists actually grasped their new opportunity to develop and grow is questionable. The eighteenth century witnessed a significant decline in nonconformity. Russell Richey notes:

> decline in numbers, decline in chapels, decline in the percentage of time Dissenters were willing to devote to religion, decline in morality, and…decline in financial support.[25]

This he identifies as the result of toleration. Whilst Richey emphasises the limitations which toleration imposed upon

---

[23] Some of the limitations of the Toleration Act have been mentioned in the previous chapter.
[24] Wykes, '"The Settling of Meetings and the Preaching of the Gospel"', JURCHS, 5 (1992-1997), pp.127-145.
[25] Russell E. Richey, 'Effects of Toleration on Eighteenth-Century Dissent', JRH, 8 (1975), pp.350-363.

Dissent, it seems more probable that it was the freedoms which brought about the decline.

Inherent in the concept of the liberty of conscience granted by the Toleration Act is the acceptance of the validity of a diversity of religious opinion. The nonconformist churches each began to see themselves as one among a number of legitimate churches. They also realised the value of co-operating with each other in seeking to defend and further their religious freedoms. Both points are illustrated by the establishment of the Committee of Three Denominations in 1702, which saw Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists co-operating to promote nonconformist interests in the face of the Tory reaction of Anne's reign. The members were willing even to recognise the validity of Quakerism, as evidenced by their appeal to their co-religionists in New England on Friends' behalf when Friends complained to the Committee of the severe laws against them in that part of the world.[26] The downside of this improvement in inter-denominational relationships was the erosion of group consciousness. As nonconformists came to accept the validity of other denominations, strict adherence to their own religious standpoints lost significance. This is demonstrated by the fact that, during the post-toleration period, some nonconformist groups became inculcated with heresy or lost their identity completely and were subsumed by other religious movements. The most notable examples were the growth of Socinianism among General Baptists and the submergence of English Presbyterianism by Unitarianism. It will be argued

---

[26] Roger Thomas in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, p.131.

below that a group's susceptibility to this was largely determined by the nature of its structure of authority and organisation.

Toleration also contributed to decline in other ways. With toleration, nonconformists no longer needed all their energies simply to survive persecution. They now had more freedom to take an interest in worldly matters, from increased trade with members of other denominations to participation in social activities. An increasing interest in worldly pursuits meant that nonconformists had a little less time for religion. It also led to less strict adherence to the sometimes overbearing rules of behaviour and dress to which the members of some nonconformist groups were subject. In Friends' case, this provoked the promotion of uniformity of dress mentioned in the previous chapter.

The end of severe persecution also meant that nonconformists no longer needed to strive against oppressive forces. What they were dissenting from became less clear. As the early generations of nonconformists died, the Dissenting churches lost their spiritual and missionary ardour. The early nonconformists were men and women whose zeal for reform of religion had led them to reject the Church of England, to labour in spreading their message and establishing their churches and to endure great sufferings in the process. Subsequent generations had not had to suffer for the principles of their forebears. Many doubtless lost sight of what those principles had been or came to doubt whether they now warranted

their suffering even the remaining limitations of nonconformity. The result was a spiritual decline; a diminution of spiritual fervour and a descent into complacency. Indeed, as Richey argues:

> In the second and successive decades of the eighteenth century the question "Why dissent?" became unavoidable. For some there came no answer.[27]

Organisational Structure

The various nonconformist groups developed different organisational structures, which imposed varying levels of limitation upon the spiritual freedom of their members. They differed concerning the centre of spiritual authority. It will be argued that there were three basic types of organisational structure to be found among these nonconformist groups: those in which authority resided in a single leader, those in which authority resided in the individual congregation and those in which authority resided in the church. These three models will be examined in turn to determine how the nature of a group's system of organisation and authority determined its likelihood of suffering internal divisions and its ability to bring an end to such divisions or to survive them without significant loss of membership.

---

[27] Richey, 'Effects of Toleration on Eighteenth-Century Dissent', JRH, 8 (1975), pp.350-363.

Monocratic Leadership

In this model, authority resides in an individual who commands the compliance of his followers through the force of his charismatic personality. The Muggletonians were an example of this type of organisation. As Barry Reay has pointed out, post-Restoration Muggletonian organisation was informal and minimal. It relied primarily upon the personal oversight and correspondence of Lodowick Muggleton himself with the assistance of a few trusted followers in the localities.[28] This system could only be effective in a small or geographically confined sect. Although Muggletonianism spread from London to many areas of England during the seventeenth century, Reay estimates that their numbers never exceeded several hundred.[29] By contrast, George Fox could not have relied so heavily upon his personal oversight and correspondence to govern the tens of thousands of Friends throughout England and overseas during this period.

There were a number of factors which made the Muggletonians less prone to internal division than might be expected of a group with very little organisational structure. It was largely the teaching of John Reeve which asserted the authority of the Muggletonian leadership. However, following Reeve's death in 1658, it was Lodowick Muggleton who reaped the benefits and was able to establish himself as the monocratic

---

[28] Barry Reay in Hill et al., Muggletonians, pp.34-35. In this chapter, Reay gives an excellent account of Muggletonian theology, organisation, persecution, membership and geographical distribution.
[29] Reay in Hill et al., Muggletonians, p.55.

leader of the sect which soon came to bear his name. Reeve and Muggleton claimed to have received a special, divine commission. They saw themselves as the two last witnesses foretold in Revelation 11 and this was the basis upon which they gathered followers around them. This gave them a level of spiritual superiority within their group that was not matched by the leaders of other nonconformist groups. The latter generally rose to prominence by virtue of their particular talents as preachers and proselytisers. Men such as Fox were regarded by their co-religionists as being particularly spiritually gifted but they did not tend to profess the extraordinary divine commission to which the Muggletonian leaders laid claim. Reeve also professed to receive messages directly from God. Thus, he was able to clearly enunciate his theology, sparing his followers the need to quarrel over such matters themselves.[30]

Whilst the basis of the spiritual authority of the Muggletonian leadership was the result of Reeve's teaching, it was Muggleton who had the force of character to carry it through. Christopher Hill has explained that much of Muggleton's success lay in the fact that he had a certain easy-going tolerance which enabled the sect to retain many of the Ranters who joined them during the 1650s. Muggleton exercised a lenient attitude towards occasional conformity, payment of tithes and the like and was not a severe moral critic of his

---

[30] Christopher Hill has argued that every significant doctrine of the Muggletonians is to be found in the writings of John Reeve and that Muggleton's contributions to theology were puerile or non-existent: Christopher Hill in Hill et al., Muggletonians, p.91.

followers.[31] Whilst this latitude undoubtedly explains the loyalty of many of his followers, Muggleton was not above using coercion to assert his authority.

Muggleton would excommunicate those who questioned him. As Reay explains, when a Muggletonian was excommunicated, other members were forbidden to eat, drink or trade with that person even if they were family members.[32] Because of the authority that he had assumed over the sect, Muggleton could excommunicate an opponent without being obliged to convince the other members of the group of the offender's guilt. Reeve and Muggleton were also notorious for their cursing of religious opponents.

The practice of blessing and cursing was an effective means of controlling followers. Loyal followers were rewarded with the assurance of salvation granted by Muggleton's blessing. For example, in December 1664, Muggleton wrote to Thomas Tomkinson in Staffordshire, informing him that by accepting Muggleton's commission, Tomkinson had attained a safe condition:

> And…I do pronounce you one of the blessed of the Lord both of soul and body to eternity, which is more peace than the tongue of man can express.

The blessing evidently had the desired effect of confirming Tomkinson's devotion as he reports, 'from henceforth I began to

---

[31] Hill in Hill et al., Muggletonians, p.99.
[32] Reay in Hill et al., Muggletonians, p.38.

be bold and would enter into disputes with any man'. He also won a few converts to Muggletonianism.[33]

As blessing was an effective means of encouraging the loyalty of Muggleton's followers, cursing was an effective means of coercing it. The fear of being damned was a powerful disincentive to challenges to Muggleton's leadership. More typically, Reeves and Muggleton cursed enemies outside the sect. There was bitter hostility between Muggletonians and Friends throughout the second half of the seventeenth century and personal confrontations between the two groups frequently resulted in the Muggletonians cursing the Friends and, occasionally, vice versa. For example, writers on both sides described one such meeting at the home of Friend, Richard Whitpain, in Eastcheap, London, on 2 July 1659. On this occasion the five Friends present were cursed.[34] Muggleton was particularly keen to boast of the deaths of Thomas Loe and Josiah Coale shortly after he had cursed them to eternal damnation in 1668.[35] Nonetheless, Muggleton's curses were much more effective in preventing internal challenges than external ones because his followers believed in the efficacy of those curses, whereas external opponents tended not to because they rejected Muggleton's claimed spiritual authority.

---

[33] Lodowick Muggleton, 'the prophet of the most high God the man Christ Jesus in glory', to Thomas Tomkinson, 9 December 1664, transcribed with additional notes by Thomas Tomkinson, British Library, MS Add.42505, fos.6-7.

[34] Laurence Claxton, The Quakers Downfal, London, 1659, pp.19-20; Lodowick Muggleton, The Neck of the Quakers Broken, Amsterdam, 1663, p.21; John Harwood, The Lying Prophet Discovered, London, 1659, pp.15-17.

[35] Muggleton, Acts, pp.114-116, 121. The Acts of the Witnesses was Muggleton's autobiography and it was published posthumously.

The ability of monocratic leaders to stave off internal challenges and divisions is dependent upon their followers' acceptance of their spiritual authority. Problems arise when followers question that authority. Indeed, the same spiritual quest which leads a person to join such a radical religious movement may likewise lead that person to seek further, perhaps even to believe that he or she has received an extraordinary divine commission equal or superior to that claimed by the sect's leader. This was the nature of the first of the two serious challenges to Muggleton's leadership.

Laurence Clarkson's challenge, c.1659-1661

Laurence Clarkson's challenge came shortly after Reeve's death in 1658 and before Muggleton's sole leadership of the sect was secure. The Quaker account of the meeting at Richard Whitpain's house in 1659 demonstrates that Muggleton was not universally regarded as the outright leader of the sect at this point, at least by external observers. Harwood refers to Muggleton as Clarkson's 'companion' and indicates that it was Clarkson, more than Muggleton, who spoke in defence of the sect's doctrine.[36]

Clarkson was attempting to carve out a leadership role for himself. Between 1659 and 1660, he published five books, seeking to promote himself as a champion of Reeve's doctrine.[37]

---

[36] Harwood, The Lying Prophet, [title page], pp.15-16.
[37] These five books, which are listed in chronological order in Muggleton, Acts, p.81 are: Laurence Claxton, Look About You, London, 1659; Laurence Claxton, The Quakers Downfal, London, 1659; Laurence

He evidently hoped to present himself as Reeve's successor. Certainly Reay believes that this was an attempted 'putsch' against Muggleton and an attempt to succeed Reeve and he notes that Clarkson tried to stir up support for himself in Cambridgeshire and Kent.[38] That Clarkson believed that he alone was divinely qualified to replace Reeve is demonstrated by the titles that he gave himself in his writings of this time. He calls himself, 'the only true bishop and faithful messenger of Christ Jesus' and 'the only true converted messenger of Christ Jesus'.[39]

Muggleton's account also indicates that Clarkson aimed to usurp Muggleton's position:

> He grew so proud and lording over the believers, saying that nobody could write in the vindication of this commission, now John Reeve was dead, but he.

Commenting on Clarkson's The Lost Sheep Found, Muggleton notes clear evidence of Clarkson's ambition. He complains that Clarkson:

> proudly exalted himself into John Reeve's chair, exalting John Reeve and himself, but quite excluded me in all the book.[40]

Claxton, A Paradisical Dialogue Betwixt Faith and Reason, London, 1660; 'A Wonder of Wonders', which does not appear to be extant and Laurence Claxton, The Lost Sheep Found, London, 1660. Look About You was also published as Laurence Claxton, The Right Devil Discovered, London, 1659.

[38] Reay in Hill et al., Muggletonians, p.171.

[39] Claxton, A Paradisical Dialogue, [title page]; Claxton, The Lost Sheep Found, [title page].

[40] Muggleton, Acts, p.81.

Muggleton took swift action to combat Clarkson's challenge by forbidding him from further writing:

> I put him down for ever writing any more, and I wrote to the believers in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere, that he was put down for his pride and covetousness, for ever writing any more upon that account. And the believers did obey my voice everywhere.

In 1661, Clarkson eventually sought and received Muggleton's forgiveness but Muggleton still 'tied him not to write anymore'.[41] Clearly Muggleton recognised that using their literary talents in defence or promotion of their faith was an effective means by which sectaries could increase their prestige within their religious group.

Whether Clarkson really was as easily dealt with as Muggleton reports is doubtful. Nevertheless, it is clear that Muggleton's position of authority was secure enough to enable him to command the support of the vast majority of his followers. Perhaps the failure of his leadership challenge made Clarkson doubt his own calling, for it is otherwise difficult to explain his decision to humble himself to Muggleton rather than to continue his spiritual quest outside the sect. Alternatively, that the power and veracity of his own spiritual commission would be made clear to posterity, perhaps Muggleton over-stated Clarkson's repentance in much the same way that Leo Damrosch suggests Friends may have overstated James Nayler's repentance, two years earlier.[42]

---

[41] Muggleton, Acts, p.81.
[42] Damrosch, The Sorrows, pp.248-270.

Muggletonian 'Immediate Notice' Controversy, c.1670

Around 1670, Muggleton faced a second challenge to his leadership. This controversy had a certain amount in common with the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Quaker controversies in that the protagonists believed that their original principles had been forsaken. Just as Perrot, Wilkinson, Story and their supporters believed that they were defending Friends' ancient beliefs against innovations imposed by the Quaker leadership, Muggleton's challengers believed that they were defending Reeve's original teaching against a doctrinal innovation imposed by Muggleton. As William Lamont explains, the controversy centred upon Muggleton's repudiation of one of the tenet's of Reeve's theology: belief in immediate notice. Muggleton's personal contribution to Muggletonian theology was to assert that God took no notice of his saints; he was unmoved by suffering or by prayer.[43]

According to Muggleton's account, the leaders of the 'rebellion', as he termed it, were led by William Medgate, Thomas Burton, a Mr. Witall and Walter Bohanan.[44] He claims that they, 'drew a many believers to side with them for a season'.[45] It is clear from the list of nine assertions Medgate sent to Muggleton, that the dissidents objected to the power that Muggleton had assumed to himself at the expense of his

---

[43] William Lamont in Hill et al., Muggletonians, pp.134-135, 155.
[44] Lamont identifies the latter as Walter Buchanan.
[45] Muggleton, Acts, p.136 [mistakenly numbered 236].

followers and his fellow prophet, Reeve. Only the first assertion concerns the doctrinal point at issue. The remaining eight accuse Muggleton of assuming personal powers.[46]

Muggleton responded by justifying his rejection of immediate notice and asserting his own spiritual superiority in doing so, claiming:

> no man now upon earth can truly say that God hath minded, or taken notice of him, but myself only.

Moreover, he freely admitted his claim to each of the powers enumerated in Medgate's list, asserting his position as God's ambassador and arguing, 'a prophet's word is as the word of God himself'. He reminded the dissidents of the spiritual insignificance of his followers, declaring, 'no prophet, no saint' and even argued that his own spiritual commission was more powerful than Reeve's:

> And seeing God hath honoured me to be the longer liver, he hath given me a double power…God hath seated and established the commission wholly upon me, so that the prophet now alive doth stand in God's place and doth represent his person…neither can any man have true peace in his soul but by casting himself by faith wholly upon the prophet that is now alive.[47]

Although he may have believed that his spiritual authority was as extensive as he claimed, it may be that Muggleton exaggerated the power he believed was vested in him. Emphasising his followers' spiritual dependency upon himself

---

[46] William Medgate's paper, reproduced in Muggleton, Acts, p.137.
[47] Muggleton, Acts, pp.138-152.

may have been an effective means by which Muggleton could deter further secedes to the dissidents.

Thus, Muggleton dealt with his challengers by defending his authority as sole prophet. He then invoked his arbitrary powers against the four ringleaders: 'Two of them I did excommunicate, and the other two I gave sentence of damnation to eternity'. He threatened their supporters with excommunication if they should have any further contact with the ringleaders, 'which the people did obey and were settled in peace again'.[48]

It would appear that Muggleton successfully used his powers as monocratic leader of the sect to silence the opposition. However, resentment of Muggleton's repudiation of Reeve on this issue evidently lingered. The author of the epistle dedicatory to The Acts of the Witnesses felt the need to assert Muggleton's spiritual equality with Reeve, calling upon the unquestioned authority of Reeve to assert that of Muggleton:

> These two prophets were jointly chosen by God, and made equal in power and authority; for the prophet Reeve saith that his fellow witness had as great power as he had himself…If this be granted, then it must follow that there can be no salvation to such as shall reject him, or his writings, although they pretend to own John Reeve.[49]

---

[48] Muggleton, Acts, p.136 [mistakenly numbered 236].
[49] Muggleton, Acts, [epistle dedicatory, pp.3-4 or p.4]. There are two 1699 editions of Muggleton, Acts. The epistle dedicatory to one, probably the earlier edition, includes the allegation that Judge Jeffreys committed suicide; partial fulfilment of Muggleton's desire

This need to defend Muggleton's authority so soon after his death contrasts with the preamble to Fox's posthumously published Journal, wherein the internal divisions of Friends are mentioned only in regard to Fox's success in overcoming them.[50]

Autonomous Congregations

In the second model of nonconformist organisation, authority resides in the individual congregation. The seventeenth-century Independents, Particular Baptists and General Baptists conform to this model. In each case, the group as a whole may be termed a church. There was a basic level of unity of faith and practice among the various congregations that constituted each church. This unity is demonstrated particularly by the collaboration of members of the individual congregations in issuing confessions of faith and by the convening of regional and national assemblies of representatives of the individual congregations. In other words, there was a sense of denominational consciousness within each of these churches.

However, these were churches which had rejected the hierarchical structure of the Church of England and embraced the concept of gathered congregations of believers. Accordingly, the individual congregations of these churches

---

to see the downfall of his persecutors. The epistle dedicatory to the other edition omits this passage and is signed, 'T.T.'.

[50] A Journal...of...George Fox...First Volume, London, 1694, p.x.

were self-governing. They normally chose their own ministers, they disciplined their own members and they determined the particulars of their religious practice. In some cases, especially among the Independents, even the specifics of belief were agreed within the congregations or left to the discretion of the individual member, provided that they were in sufficient agreement to subscribe to the covenant of their congregation.

It is difficult to place the English Presbyterians within a definite model of church organisation, as they spent much of the post-Restoration period unsure of how to define themselves and struggling to come to terms with the fact that they had become *a* church, rather than part of *the* church. Nonetheless, it is within this model that they may most comfortably be placed. The English Presbyterians did not share the Independents' and Baptists' belief in the 'gathered church' of true believers, thinking instead in terms of the parish.[51] Thus, the centre of authority differed from that of the Baptist and Independent congregations. In Presbyterian congregations, the members had a smaller share of authority. Spiritual matters were regarded as largely the minister's concern and usually it was just the trustees and principal subscribers, rather than the whole congregation, who chose the minister.[52] However, as Goring has argued, it was never the intention of the English Presbyterians to set up a hierarchical system of synods, presbyteries and churches on the Scottish model. They had no

---

[51] Goring in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, p.21.
[52] Goring in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, p.25.

enthusiasm for this type of organisation and attached much greater importance to the individual congregation.[53]

Because of the freedom enjoyed by the individual congregations in this model of church organisation, a tendency towards differences over the non-essentials of faith and practice is to be expected. Theoretically at least, this need not be a cause of distress to the members of the church because a degree of diversity is implicit in this model and should therefore be considered acceptable. Thus, issues, which would have resulted in open division in churches of a more authoritarian structure, need not have done so in churches of this model. In practice, however, it will be seen that the development of group consciousness resulted in an increasing desire by some members for uniformity between congregations.

Here, a distinction may be drawn between the Independent and Presbyterian churches and those of the Baptists. The autonomy of the individual congregation was such an essential feature of Independency that some diversity between congregations was viewed as acceptable. This is evidenced by the lack of open division among post-Restoration Independents. Similarly, because they regarded themselves as parish ministers serving members of varying levels of godliness, the Presbyterians did not demand strict doctrinal unity. Their toleration of diversity of opinion is likewise demonstrated by a lack of internal divisions during this period. By contrast, within the Baptist churches, although the autonomy of the

---

[53] Goring in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, pp.19-20.

individual congregation was valued, it was of secondary importance to the quest to tie faith and religious practice firmly to the dictates of Scripture and the example of the primitive Christians. This is demonstrated by the vitriolic tone of the pamphlets exchanged during some of the General and Particular Baptist controversies and by the tendency of Baptists of both persuasions to interfere in the internal disagreements of congregations and, indeed, denominations of which they were not themselves members.[54]

Churches consisting of autonomous congregations were particularly ill-placed to deal with divisions when they did arise as they lacked the means to determine which of the opposing sides was right or to enforce a decision. Both in churches possessing a hierarchical system of organisation and in churches governed by a monocratic leader, there was a body or a person of ultimate authority who could adjudicate between differing church members. This was lacking in churches of autonomous congregations. In these churches, it was the responsibility of the individual congregation to determine disagreements between their members, in much the same way as Monthly Meetings would attempt to resolve disagreements between local Friends. However, whereas Quaker Monthly Meetings could refer difficult disagreements to the Quarterly or Yearly Meeting, which possessed the authority to impose a decision, autonomous congregations had no body of absolute authority to appeal to if they were unable to resolve internal disagreement

---

[54] One of the controversies which illustrates both of these points is the Particular Baptist Hymn Singing Controversy discussed below.

themselves. These churches were also very limited in what they could do if there was serious disagreement between individual congregations.

As among Friends, certain members of other nonconformist groups emerged as leaders; men who were widely believed to be endued with greater spiritual attributes and authority than others. However, such people were largely unsuccessful in combating internal divisions. As the examples of Collier and Caffyn below show, divisive controversies were almost invariably centred upon charismatic individuals; well respected members of their church, at least in their local area. Only such people had sufficient influence to carry a significant proportion of their co-religionists with them. Challenges by lesser men and women were more easily dealt with at the congregational level. Neither they, nor the congregations to which they belonged, were prepared to bow to other leaders' attempts to exert their personal authority. Where they existed, regional or national assemblies were also powerless to resolve disagreements because their role was merely advisory rather than authoritative.

Both the General and Particular Baptists of the seventeenth century struggled to resolve internal divisions because of the autonomy of their individual congregations. The difficulty experienced by the Baptists in resolving internal controversies is most clearly illustrated by the Particular Baptists' inability to discipline Thomas Collier and the General Baptists' failure to discipline Matthew Caffyn.

Thomas Collier's Doctrinal Deviation, c.1674-1691

During the 1640s, Thomas Collier earned a reputation as a champion and defender of the Particular Baptists, establishing congregations in south-west England and taking on religious opponents in print and in public disputation. However, his theology became increasingly heterodox from a Particular Baptist perspective as he abandoned Calvinist predestinarian doctrine and came to embrace the concept of general atonement. However, Collier did not leave the Particular Baptist church and join the General Baptists. It was not unheard of for people to move from one Baptist church to the other during this period. For example, when Benjamin Keach embraced Calvinist theology in about 1672, he and his supporters split from their General Baptist congregation in Tooley Street, London and formed their own Particular Baptist congregation in Horsleydown.[55] Collier's Particular Baptist opponents would probably have been relieved if he and his supporters had split from their congregation in Southwick and set up a General Baptist congregation. However, Collier showed no inclination to leave the congregation he had founded. Moreover, he expounded his increasingly Arminian sentiments in print.[56]

---

[55] James Barry Vaughn, 'Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)', Ph.D. Thesis, University of St. Andrew's, 1989, p.17.

[56] Richard Land charts the progression of Collier's deviation from Calvinist orthodoxy through three of Collier's 1670s works: Thomas Collier, The Body of Divinity, London, 1674; 'An Additional Word' [1676]; Thomas Collier, A Sober and Moderate Answer to Nehemiah Coxe's Invective, London, 1677. Although 'An Additional Word' does not survive, Land was able to reconstruct its contents from the detailed reply to it provided by Nehemiah Coxe, Vindiciae Veritatis, London, 1677: Land, 'Doctrinal Controversies', Chapter 6.

Collier's opponents within his congregation and local area evidently struggled to deal with the situation. In his study of Collier's career and theology, Richard Land traces the transformation of Collier's doctrine and the Particular Baptists' attempts to discipline him.[57] The only contemporary account of events is that of Collier and his supporters.[58] It is not clear whether there was any real attempt to deal with Collier on a congregational level. If Collier's account is to be believed, he was unaware that he had caused any offence until a meeting of ministers from several neighbouring congregations was held at Warminster on 5 September 1676 to discuss Collier's 'An Additional Word' and it was decided that the matter should be referred to London Baptists.[59] Either Collier fails to mention any attempt by dissatisfied members of his congregation to settle the issue or no attempt was made because the dissatisfied had no confidence that their minister would listen to their concerns. Either way, they evidently sought the advice of neighbouring ministers who, lacking the authority to deal with Collier themselves, referred the matter to London. Because of the lack of church authority inherent in a group which asserts the autonomy of the individual congregation, London Baptists had no greater authority than the West Country ministers to deal with Collier. However, their only hope was to try to convince Collier's supporters and other members of the church that they did.

---

[57] Land, 'Doctrinal Controversies', Chapter 6.
[58] Collier, Narrative, n.p., n.d. As this is an account of events which took place in 1676 and 1677, it is likely that it was published c.1677.
[59] Collier, Narrative, p.2.

Answering Collier's printed works did not pose such a problem. By publishing, Collier had brought the matter into the public arena so he could not legitimately complain if someone chose to respond to him in print. In an epistle of endorsement signed by six leading Particular Baptists, the publication of Coxe's reply to 'An Additional Word' was justified as necessary to prevent the world from believing that all Particular Baptists shared Collier's errors. Expressing the same concern for public image which characterised Friends' responses to internal dissidents, they explained that Coxe's printed response was necessary:

> Because although it be a most unequal judgement to make the errors of one single person under any profession to reflect upon the whole of the same…yet woeful experience hath taught us that there is nothing more usual with the world.[60]

Disciplining Collier and removing him from his position as a Particular Baptist elder was more problematic. That the West Country Particular Baptists appealed to those in London for assistance in this matter indicates that they looked to London for leadership. Indeed Collier accuses Pen, an opponent from a nearby congregation, of claiming that 'the church at London was the representative of all the churches in the nation'.[61] This respect for the London ministers, Land explains,

---

[60] Coxe, Vindiciae Veritatis, [Epistle, p.1]. This epistle is signed by William Kiffin, Joseph Maisters, Henry Forty, Daniel Dyke, James Fitton and William Collins.
[61] Collier, Narrative, p.10.

was probably a consequence of the aggressive church planting programme of London Baptists during the 1640s and 1650s, to which the churches in the localities owed their existence.[62] Nonetheless, only the individual congregation had the authority to discipline and to excommunicate one of its members. This is undoubtedly why Kiffin resorted to claiming that Collier remained a member of his London congregation. If he could have proved this, Collier would have fallen under the jurisdiction of Kiffin's congregation and excommunication would have been possible. However, Collier rejected the claim.

Although Collier may have had no letter of dismissal from the London congregation to which both he and Kiffin had belonged some twenty-five years earlier, he pointed out that the congregation concerned no longer existed. It had 'by consent divided into two' at some point after his departure and neither half had since laid claim to him as a member. Collier had subsequently spent fifteen years as a member of a congregation in Wells before moving to his present congregation of which he had now been a member for eight or nine years:

> actual cohabitation and full communion being that which proves actual and absolute membership, there being no rule in Scripture that makes letters of commendation or dismission to be essential in this matter, but a real reception and actual fellowship in all the ordinances of Christ.[63]

---

[62] Land, 'Doctrinal Controversies', p.267.
[63] Collier, Narrative, p.4. When nonconformists, other than Friends, used the term 'communion', they were generally referring not only to fellowship but also to celebration of the Lord's Supper together.

Despite Collier's opposition, London Baptists still attempted to take action against him. Kiffin and others visited the West Country to meet Collier and his local opponents to try to determine the matter and, when that failed, messengers of local churches were called upon to meet to give their advice. However, attempts actually to impose a decision were recognised as an infringement of the autonomy of the congregation. Kiffin openly declared Collier to be a heretic and the appointed messengers also decided against him. Kiffin was particularly highly esteemed among Particular Baptists so his actions may also be seen as an attempt to assert his personal authority against Collier. However, Collier clearly did not believe Kiffin to possess any greater authority than himself. He and his supporters recognised the attempts of Kiffin and others to discipline him as 'an usurpation over both him [Collier] and the church to which he was related'.[64]

Kiffin could reject Collier as a heretic as vehemently as he liked but it was to no avail unless Collier's own congregation believed that Kiffin had authority over him. Land has pointed out that Collier must have had the support of the majority of his congregation, as his opponents would otherwise have been able to institute action against him by a majority vote within the membership without an appeal to outside authority.[65] Collier's majority signalled its rejection of Kiffin's claim and his attempt to usurp their authority and

---

[64] Collier, Narrative, p.6.
[65] Land, 'Doctrinal Controversies', p.279.

also expressed agreement with Collier's doctrine.[66] Collier's opponents were powerless to take further action against him. He continued to publish his Arminian opinions. Land concludes that Collier probably remained in fellowship with the Southwick congregation until his death in 1691 and that much of that congregation embraced his teachings and probably supported A Short Confession.[67]

Indeed it seems likely that members of the Southwick congregation were largely responsible for producing this confession, which asserts a belief in general redemption, for its writers note that:

> we are looked upon as a people degenerated from almost all other baptised congregations (at least in our parts of the nation).
> They seem to find themselves outside both the Particular and General Baptist churches and to express a desire for more 'acquaintance, acceptance and fellowship' with either.[68]

It is possible that Collier's Southwick congregation may have become isolated from other Particular Baptists. However, its members were not excommunicated. Collier and his supporters were expressing beliefs which directly contradicted Particular Baptist theology but their opponents could do nothing more than

---

[66] A letter from Collier's congregation written in response to a letter from messengers meeting in Bristol. The letter from Collier's Southwick congregation is undated but the Bristol letter is dated 2 August 1677. Both are reproduced in Collier, Narrative, pp.12-23.
[67] Land, 'Doctrinal Controversies', p.286.
[68] A Short Confession...Published by some Baptised Congregations in the West, London, 1691, pp.2-3. The introduction to the confession is signed by John Collier and John Pockridge. A Short Confession is attached to Thomas Collier's final work, published posthumously: Thomas Collier, A Doctrinal Discourse of Self-Denial, London, 1691.

condemn their beliefs and probably encourage others not to associate with them. Because of its belief in the autonomy of the individual congregation, the Particular Baptist church could not officially disown these people whom they regarded as heretics.

Parallels may be drawn between the case of Thomas Collier and that of the dissident Friend, George Keith. Both had earned a distinguished reputation within their church as missionaries and defenders of the faith of their church. Both later underwent theological development which put them at odds with that faith. However, a stark contrast may be drawn between the success with which the two churches dealt with their challengers. Keith presented a greater challenge than Collier did. He was considerably more vocal and prolific in his attacks upon Friends than Collier was against his co-religionists. Indeed, Collier and his supporters merely seem to have wished to be left in peace from external interference. It is true that Keith was silenced only by death. Nonetheless, his attacks became those of merely one of a number of external critics of Quakerism. Through the authority of the London Yearly Meeting, leading Friends were able to disown him, thus making it clear both to Friends everywhere and to external observers that Keith was no longer a member of the Society and that his opinions were not those of Friends. By contrast, because the congregation to which he belonged would not disown him and the Particular Baptist church had no authority to do so, Thomas Collier ended his life officially a Particular Baptist even though his theology was anything but particular.

Matthew Caffyn's Socinian Heresy

The General Baptists suffered even more serious consequences of the lack of church authority inherent in their type of church organisation. Their inability and unwillingness to take action against Matthew Caffyn for expressing Socinian sentiments split the church in two and undermined the doctrinal integrity of its members. Like Collier and Keith, Caffyn was a highly regarded member of his church. He was the minister of the General Baptist congregation in Horsham, Sussex, a Messenger, church-planter and defender of his church.[69]

It is not clear when Caffyn came to adopt anti-Trinitarian principles. According to Adam Taylor's nineteenth-century account, Joseph Wright accused Caffyn of denying both the divinity and humanity of Christ and demanded that he be expelled from all communion with the church. However, the General Assembly, the annual meeting of representatives of congregations from throughout the country, acquitted Caffyn and censured Wright for his want of charity. The date of this meeting is unknown but Wright encountered a similar reaction at an assembly in Aylesbury in about 1686.[70]

---

[69] B.R. White's entry for Caffyn in Greaves and Zaller, Biographical Dictionary, Vol.1, pp.115-116.

[70] Adam Taylor, The History of the English General Baptists in Two Parts. Part First: The English General Baptists of the Seventeenth Century, London, 1818, pp.466-467. It is difficult to assess the veracity of much of Taylor's account because of the paucity of references to the sources of his information.

Taylor reports that when Buckinghamshire General Baptists excluded John Weller for maintaining Socinian sentiments, Caffyn wrote to Weller frankly avowing that he was of the same opinion as him. In 1693, the letter was produced as evidence against Caffyn at the General Assembly.[71] The representatives of the Northern Association asked the Assembly to determine whether or not it was erroneous to deny either the divinity or the humanity of Christ. Both were universally declared to be errors. Caffyn was accused of owning the second error but he 'was acquitted by far the greater part of the Assembly'.[72]

Three years later, when the General Assembly met again, the issue appears to have been raised once more. The minutes contain a reference which may relate to the issue of the nature of Christ:

> The matter…presented from the Western churches to the Assembly touching our God and our Lord Jesus Christ being put to the vote whether it should be publicly heard and debated. It was carried in the negative.[73]

This may have been a refusal to discuss the Socinian issue. Certainly, it was at this meeting that a large proportion of the delegates became so dissatisfied with the General Assembly's failure to take action against heresy that they seceded from the Assembly. They determined to hold their own

---

[71] Taylor, The History of the English General Baptists, pp.467-468.
[72] General Assembly Minutes, Goodman's Fields, 6 June 1693, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.39-40.
[73] General Assembly Minutes, Goswell Street, London, 6 June 1696, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, p.43. Caffyn was one of the messengers present and participating in the business of this meeting.

separate general meeting, termed the General Association, the following year.[74]

The General Assembly's failure to take action against one man had resulted in, numerically, perhaps the most serious division within any of the post-Restoration nonconformist churches. The General Association's first meeting, on 12 May 1697, was attended by sixteen messengers, elders and representatives of General Baptist churches in London, Kent, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Buckinghamshire and more joined during the next few years. At this first meeting it was agreed:

> that we cannot have communion with any persons at the Lord's Table, nor admit any to preach amongst us that are in communion with that General Assembly until that assembly purge themselves from the said heresy for which we made our separation from them.[75]

The 1697 General Assembly did little to resolve the issue but rebuked the seceders for their 'disorderly' separation.[76] However, in 1698, they did consider whether or not it was erroneous to deny either the divinity or humanity of Christ:

> And the question being put whether they did own the same to be sound doctrine or error, the said Assembly being called over by their names it was owned by all save one to be errors.

---

[74] General Association Minutes, Whites Alley, Moorfields, 12 May, 1697, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, p.45.
[75] General Association Minutes, Whites Alley, Moorfields, 12 May, 1697, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.45-48.
[76] General Assembly Minutes, Goswell Street, London, 26 May 1697, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.50-52. Again, Caffyn was one of the messengers present.

The one who did not declare these to be errors is not identified. It may not have been Caffyn, as his name does not appear as a signatory to the minutes of this meeting, indicating that he was not present. However, the Assembly did agree 'that Matthew Caffyn shall be admitted to a fair trial in our next Assembly'.[77] However, by signing a somewhat ambiguously worded statement concerning the nature of Christ, Caffyn was deemed to have satisfied the Assembly and was not tried.[78] The General Association, however, was not satisfied and drew up an alternative statement.[79]

Eventually, in 1704, a joint committee did succeed in drawing up a clear statement of belief in the Trinity to which all members were required to subscribe.[80] In signing, 'The Unity of the Churches' members were not permitted to ask any questions about it but neither would any questions be asked of them.[81] This presumably ensured that any differences in interpretation of the statement would not be manifested. However, the reunion of the General Assembly was short-lived. In 1708, supporters of Caffyn separated from the reunited General Assembly and it was not until 1731 that unity was finally restored.[82]

---

[77] General Assembly Minutes, 15-17 June 1698, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.53-54.
[78] General Assembly Minutes, Horsleydown, London, 22-24 May, 1700 and 27-30 May, 1702, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.66-67, 71.
[79] This was much more explicit in asserting belief in the Trinity and it is transcribed in Taylor, The History of the English General Baptists, p.474.
[80] Extract from 'The Unity of the Churches', 1704, transcribed in Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, p.340.
[81] Extract from White's Alley Book II, 7 October, 1705, transcribed in, Whitley, Minutes, p.151.
[82] Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, p.340.

The General Assembly's failure to take action against Caffyn is not easily explained. This case was extremely damaging and potentially dangerous to the General Baptist church. Socinianism was regarded as a serious heresy during the late seventeenth century. Anti-Trinitarians were specifically excluded from the benefits of the 1689 Toleration Act and, under the Blasphemy Act of 1698, became liable to three years' imprisonment for propagating their beliefs.[83] The General Assembly must have been aware of the dangers of allowing such beliefs within their ranks to go unpunished. The entire church may have come under suspicion of Socinianism and have suffered a renewal of persecution. The Assembly did agree that anti-Trinitarian beliefs were erroneous but it did not force Caffyn to submit to a proper trial in front of the entire Assembly, nor did it publish a written condemnation of the heresies of which he was accused. Whilst the General Association demonstrated the insistence upon purity of doctrine which characterised the earlier General Baptist controversy over the laying on of hands, discussed below, the General Assembly showed a remarkable reluctance to tackle the issue.

The General Assembly's inaction must have been due at least in part to its inability to deal with a figure of Caffyn's stature. Its members were undoubtedly reluctant to be seen to be exceeding their authority in taking action against such a highly respected member. Watts has pointed out that in the mid-1690s the General Assembly rejected the church's former belief in the autonomy of the individual congregation and

---

[83] Watts, Dissenters, p.372.

declared that the congregations should abide by its decisions.[84] However, the failure to judge Caffyn shows that those who did not secede from the General Assembly were not of this opinion or at least felt very uneasy about assuming such power. Indeed, it is very doubtful that rank and file Baptists would have been prepared to relinquish the autonomy which they had enjoyed for several decades and agree to be bound by the General Assembly's decisions. As in the case of Collier, it must be assumed that Caffyn had sufficient support within his own congregation in Horsham to prevent his heresy from being dealt with at a congregational level. The General Assembly's power to excommunicate him would therefore have been highly questionable. The Assembly members may have been reluctant to believe the accusations against Caffyn and would certainly have been wary of testing their newly asserted authority upon someone of such standing.

Evidently, most members of the General Association had no such qualms. However, it should be noted that when the General Association presumed to impinge upon the Deptford congregation's attempts to deal alone with accused heretics within their congregation, Deptford Baptists accused the Association of exceeding its authority:

> We are willing to continue members of that assembly [the General Association], provided that it be agreed by them that they only meet to confer and advise for the promotion of the Gospel and the good of the whole, but not to make laws obliging particular churches

---

[84] Watts, Dissenters, p.298.

> thereby…which we think is divesting such churches of the power given them by Christ…[85]

Clearly the autonomy of the individual congregation was not willingly surrendered even by members of the General Association.

Presumably, the General Assembly could not foresee the consequences of its failure to take firm action against an accused heretic. Its inaction provoked a severe schism within the General Baptist church and left the church open to accusations of Socinianism. Worse still, it also sent the message to members that heterodox opinions may be tolerated. A.C. Underwood argues that the General Assembly came to contain more and more members who were Socinians at heart and that the vitality of the General Baptists drained away as their body became pervaded by Socinianism.[86] Lumpkin concurs, adding that as the older leadership died, laxity of principle became increasingly evident.[87] Had they foreseen the decline in their church that resulted in part from their unwillingness to stamp out heretical doctrine, perhaps the members of the General Baptist General Assembly would have been less fearful of exerting their newly claimed authority.

---

[85] 'A copy of the [Deptford] church's agreement respecting the assembly at a church meeting May 22 1699', General Association Minutes, Whites Alley, 6-7 June, 1699, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.61-62. The General Association's advice concerning those accused of heresy within the Deptford congregation is recorded in the General Association Minutes, 15-17 June, 1698, transcribed in Whitley, Minutes, pp.57-61. The Deptford congregation was one of the original members of the General Association. Its representatives did not attend again after 1699 but nor did they rejoin the General Assembly.

[86] Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, p.127.

[87] Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, p.340.

Hierarchical Structure

In the final model of nonconformist organisation, spiritual authority resides in the religious group; the church. Thus, the decisions of the leaders are considered binding upon all members of the group and are enforced through the hierarchical system of church government. This was the organisational structure that the Society of Friends adopted during the post-Restoration period.

At congregational level, authority was exercised in much the same way that it was in the churches of the second model of nonconformist organisation, particularly within the Baptist churches. In fact, within the Society of Friends, it was usually the Monthly rather than the Particular Meeting which disciplined errant Friends but it did so in much the same way as the Baptist congregation. An offending member would be visited and admonished, usually at least twice, by members of the meeting or congregation, then required to appear before that meeting or congregation. If the offender admitted guilt and repented fully, he or she would normally be readmitted to full fellowship. However, if the offender persisted in their errant behaviour despite all efforts to reclaim them, excommunication, or 'disownment' as Friends termed it, would follow. More often than not, the disciplinary process was used against people who had behaved immorally or had acted contrary to the teachings of their church, usually by marrying someone outside the sect. However, the same system could also be used to discipline those who espoused unsound doctrine or challenged

the authority of the leading members of the meeting or congregation. The authority of the Monthly Meeting or the congregation was also exercised in the resolution of differences, usually relating to money or property, between members.[88]

This was an effective system as far as it went. However, it has been shown above that churches of autonomous congregations faced serious difficulties in dealing with matters of difference or discipline which went beyond the congregational level. There was no ultimate authority within the church which could impose a resolution. This was one of the main functions of the hierarchical system introduced within the Society of Friends during the post-Restoration period. If the Monthly Meeting was unable to resolve a difference between members or if a matter of discipline or dissension affected an entire meeting or extended beyond the bounds of one Monthly Meeting, the matter would be referred to the Quarterly Meeting. Again, if the Quarterly Meeting was unable resolve the issue, the matter would be referred to the London Yearly Meeting.

The fundamental difference between Friends' Quarterly and Yearly Meetings and the regional and national associations of other nonconformist groups was that the role of the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings was not merely advisory. It was authoritative. Thus, their decisions were obligatory upon Friends. The Yearly Meeting may have published its annual

---

[88] Perhaps the key difference in procedure between Friends and Baptists was that Friends made decisions according to the 'sense' of the meeting, as described in Chapter One, whereas Baptists took a vote.

findings as 'Advice', but 'Directives' would have been a more accurate title. It is true that Friends enjoyed a certain amount of spiritual latitude in that membership was not conditional upon a statement of faith as it was within many of the other nonconformist groups. Nonetheless, in their religious practice and in their daily lives they were subject to a much more authoritarian system than other nonconformists were.

Because there is no room for diversity, this type of hierarchical system is prone to internal division when members disagree with the dictates of the group. This was true of Friends even before their organisational system was fully developed. Had it been granted that Friends during prayer should be free to either remove or keep on their hats as the Spirit directed them, Perrot and his supporters may have been appeased. However, such diversity was not tolerated and controversy escalated. Similarly, during the 1670s, if individual meetings had been allowed greater freedom to either allow or disallow women's participation in approving Friends' marriages, the Wilkinson-Story Controversy would probably not have affected so many areas of the country or lasted for so many years.

In fact, it is the Wilkinson-Story Controversy which most clearly demonstrates the potential for division inherent in this system of organisation. The resentment expressed by the Wilkinson-Story party of the interference of London and leading figures such as Fox and Fell in local business, shows that the dissidents believed that individual meetings should be

autonomous. The language used against leading Friends, particularly in William Rogers's pamphlets with their unfavourable comparisons with popery, show the resentment of this imposed authority.

The longevity of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy shows that the hierarchical model is not efficient in resolving internal divisions. Such is the unwillingness of the group to compromise with the dissidents that no accommodation is possible. This was demonstrated by the high-handed manner with which Fox and other leading Friends dealt with Wilkinson, Story and their supporters. Indeed, to compromise with the dissidents would have been to surrender some of that authority embedded in the hierarchical system. Leading Friends were not willing to do this. Without compromise, there can be little hope of bringing about an amicable resolution of differences. However, although it struggles to resolve them, the hierarchical structure of organisation is well placed to survive internal controversies and challenges to its authority.

In the hierarchical model, there are no limits to the jurisdiction of the body of ultimate authority. Thus, even Friends who are highly regarded or Friends who have the full support of their own congregation may be disciplined. Whereas the General Baptist General Assembly failed to take action against Caffyn, the London Yearly Meeting called Keith to account, examined the case and disowned him from the Society. The Particular Baptists could only hope to be rid of Collier if he left willingly or was excommunicated by his own congregation

and they were powerless to stop him publishing. By contrast, leading Friends not only had the power through the Yearly Meeting to disown any member of the Society. They also had control of the Quaker press. If leading Particular Baptists had possessed the control that Friends did, they would have been able to prevent Collier from printing as a Particular Baptist, thus making it clear that his views were not those of the vast majority of Particular Baptists.

Dissident Friends were unable to print as Friends but were forced to use other printers. Moreover, the hierarchical system of organisation made it easy for leading Friends to organise and distribute responses to the dissidents' works. Most importantly, the hierarchical system enabled leading Friends to communicate with Friends throughout the country and beyond, to let them know when action had been taken against internal challengers and to instruct Friends not to countenance such people or their opinions. Therefore, although it is ill-placed to regain dissatisfied members, a nonconformist group organised according to this model is able to survive division without devastating numerical loss, by disciplining and excommunicating internal challengers, minimising the chances of them gaining further support and promoting the authorised point of view.

Internal Division as a Symptom of the Development of Group Consciousness

It has been seen that the different models of post-Restoration nonconformist organisation varied in their susceptibility to internal controversies and in their ability to overcome those divisions. However, it should also be noted that the very process of becoming a coherent group was often dogged by internal disagreement and division. It will be argued here that internal division was a natural symptom of the development of the group consciousness which transformed haphazard gatherings of the godly into distinct churches with a distinguishable theology and organisation. This self-awareness began to develop during the earliest years of each group's existence. Indeed, most nonconformist groups were the result of like-minded individuals dividing from those whose principles they had come to reject. It will be argued that, as these groups of like-minded people sought to define themselves, their faith, religious practice and church organisation, a certain amount of disagreement was inevitable. It will also be argued that the development of denominational consciousness was accelerated by the challenges of the Restoration. Moreover, it will be seen that the development of group consciousness was manifested in antipathy between the different nonconformist groups.

The Beginnings of Group Consciousness

The early separatist groups had included people of widely differing views. Indeed, sometimes the only thing that all members of a congregation had in common was their rejection of the impurities of the Established Church. Until around the 1650s, there was a lack of clear demarcation between the groups that had emerged by that time and a certain amount of co-operation between them. Even after the Restoration there were some examples of co-operation during times of persecution, as evidenced by the collaboration of General and Particular Baptists in the publication of The Humble Apology, in which they condemned the Fifth Monarchist rising of January 1661 and assured Charles II of their loyalty towards him.[89] That the boundaries between different groups remained blurred in the early post-Restoration years is demonstrated by the tendency of Independent and some Particular Baptist congregations to include people who differed over such matters as believers' baptism and the Jewish Sabbath. However, developments within the nonconformist groups even before the Restoration show an increasing sense of group consciousness. Groups began to make statements of their faith and to establish the basics of organisational structure. That the various groups also became more aware of the differences between them is demonstrated by deteriorating relations between them.

---

[89] The Humble Apology of Some Commonly Called Anabaptists, London, 1660, pp.5ff.

During the 1640s and 1650s the Baptist groups certainly developed a clear sense of themselves as churches. Perhaps the most visible manifestation of this was their adoption of total immersion as the mode of believers' baptism. Between 1640 and 1642, both General and Particular Baptists adopted this practice.[90] They also made a concerted missionary effort, disseminating their ideas in the army and establishing many new congregations around the country. McGregor notes that by 1660 there were more than 250 Baptist congregations, mostly in London, the Midlands, the South and West.[91]

The collaboration of several congregations in drawing up confessions of faith and in forming regional associations was clear evidence that Baptists were coming to see themselves as churches. As Ruth Clifford has argued:

> The publication of several joint confessions of faith, the inauguration of quarterly area meetings and the convening of a number of general assemblies, point towards a growing self-awareness and the origins of a distinct Baptist identity during the latter part of the revolutionary period.[92]

This was group awareness not merely as Baptists but distinctly as Calvinistic and Arminian Baptists. The confessions of faith published by the two Baptist groups during the 1640s and 1650s show that each was becoming firmly established in its

---

[90] J.F. McGregor in J.F. McGregor and B. Reay, eds., Radical Religion in the English Revolution, Oxford, 1984, reprint, 1988, p.28.
[91] McGregor in McGregor and Reay, eds., Radical Religion in the English Revolution, pp.33, 35.
[92] Ruth M. Clifford, 'The General Baptists, 1640-1660', M.Litt. Thesis, Oxford University, 1991, p.11.

theological position regarding the atonement. For example, the 1644 Confession of Faith, issued by the seven Particular Baptist congregations in London states:

> God had in Christ before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of his will, foreordained some men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of his grace, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation…[93]

By contrast, the 1651 General Baptist, The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations, asserts, 'that Jesus Christ, through (or by) the grace of God, suffered death for all mankind, or every man…'[94] The growing self-awareness of the two Baptist churches is also demonstrated by the increasing hostility between them. McGregor asserts that the two groups were largely indifferent to each other.[95] However, whilst she asserts that lines of demarcation between the two were not rigid, Clifford describes disagreement between General and Particular Baptists over the issue of the atonement during the 1640s. She argues that:

> doctrinal conflict developed rapidly into personal animosity, then spilled over into pamphlet warfare as the two factions attempted to distance themselves from each other and clarify their own theological stance.[96]

---

[93] The Confession of Faith of those Churches which are commonly (though falsly) Called Anabaptists, London, 1644, article III.
[94] The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations, London, 1651, Article 17, reproduced in Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, pp.174-187. Lumpkin notes that this confession was adopted at an associational meeting of the representatives of thirty General Baptist congregations from the Midlands: Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, p.172.
[95] McGregor in McGregor and Reay, eds., Radical Religion in the English Revolution, p.35.
[96] Clifford, 'The General Baptists', pp.49-52.

Other nonconformist groups were also quick to develop a sense of group awareness. That group consciousness developed among Friends during their very early years is demonstrated by the fact that they began to develop systems of communication, procedures of discipline and so forth during the early 1650s. Rosemary Moore gives an excellent description of the developments in Quaker organisation which took place during the 1650s.[97] She notes that these early arrangements:

> were designed to meet the needs of the moment, for, in the apocalyptic excitement of 1653, setting up a church organisation designed for the long term would have seemed an irrelevance.

However, these were the foundations of the organisational structure established among Friends during the post-Restoration period.[98] Moore also claims that one of the after-effects of the Nayler affair of 1656 was to advance the Quakers' understanding of themselves as a discrete organisation and she argues that it was around this time that Friends' self-consciousness advanced to the point that they began to see themselves as a sect among others, though without diminishing their claim to be the only true church.[99]

That the Independents had also developed denominational consciousness prior to the Restoration is demonstrated by the meeting of representatives of over one hundred Independent churches at the Savoy palace in London in 1658 and by the Savoy Declaration issued by that meeting. The declaration gives a

---

[97] Moore, The Light, Chapter 10.
[98] Moore, The Light, p.129.
[99] Moore, The Light, pp.132-133.

very clear definition of Independent faith and also sets out details of organisation, officers, discipline and so forth. The autonomy of the individual congregation is firmly stated but so too is the desirability of communion between congregations.[100]

Presbyterian 'Dons' and 'Ducklings'

The above examples show that, on the eve of the Restoration, most nonconformist groups, including Friends, had already made significant progress in the development of denominational consciousness. The challenges of the Restoration, particularly the diminution of eschatological expectation and the need to hold themselves together in the face of persecution, accelerated this development but did not initiate it. By contrast, the Presbyterians had a significantly less clear sense of themselves as a group during the early years of the Restoration. More than for any other group, the Restoration forced the Presbyterians to reconsider their identity. They spent the whole of the Restoration period doing so and, even then, they largely failed to reach definite conclusions. The main internal disagreement of the Presbyterians in the post-Restoration period was directly occasioned by the question of group identity.

Because of their belief in a parochial ministry, Presbyterians had never envisaged an existence outside the national church. Whilst they had formulated opinions about how

---

[100] A Declaration of the Faith and Order Owned and Practised in the Congregational Churches in England, London, 1659, pp.56, 61-64.

the worship and organisational structure of that church may be reformed, they had never planned for a life outside that church. Thus, when the Presbyterian ministers were ejected from the Church of England shortly after the Restoration, they were completely unprepared for a separatist existence. The reluctance of many Presbyterians to accept this existence is demonstrated by the prevalence of 'partial conformity' among them. Ramsbottom has argued that it was very common for Presbyterians to attend Anglican worship and that their ministers often timed their own preaching so that it did not prevent them or their followers from attending parish worship.[101]

Presbyterian ministers became divided amongst themselves over the question of whether or not they should accept the separatist existence. Those who continued to seek comprehension were dubbed 'dons' and those who were willing to establish separatist congregations and to hope only for toleration were termed 'ducklings'. The former group included Richard Baxter whilst the latter included Samuel Annesley. Thomas notes that there were also theological differences between the two groups. The 'ducklings' tended to be strict Calvinists whereas the 'dons' tended towards Arminianism. He also argues that the differences among the Presbyterians might have contributed to the failure to achieve either toleration or comprehension c.1673-1674.[102] Certainly the division between these two factions meant that the Presbyterians were unable to formulate

---

[101] Ramsbottom, 'Presbyterians and "Partial Conformity" in the Restoration Church of England', JEH, 43 (1992), pp.249-270.
[102] Thomas in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, pp.95, 98-99.

a clear idea of what they were and what they hoped to gain from the government in terms of religious freedom.

By necessity, Presbyterians took some steps towards acceptance of the separatist existence, as demonstrated by the fact that they began to ordain new ministers outside the Church of England and even to establish academies for ministers' training. However, as H.L. Short argues, there were was no attempt to set up a national Presbyterian church.[103] The earliest post-Restoration regional associations of Presbyterian congregations were established c.1689-1691.[104] As previously mentioned, Presbyterians continued to campaign for comprehension from time to time until the Act of Toleration and it was not until that Act forced them to accept a separatist identity once and for all that they finally did so. Only then did the internal disunity of the 'dons' and 'ducklings' come to an end. Even then, the Presbyterians still found it difficult to think of themselves as a distinct church, as demonstrated by their continued attempts to reach agreement with the Independents.

Adoption of Unity of Faith and Practice

It has been seen that the awakening of group consciousness was manifested in certain developments within the

---

[103] H.L. Short in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, p.220.
[104] Geoffrey Nuttall, 'Assembly and Association in Dissent, 1689-1831', first published in G.J. Cuming and D. Baker, eds., Councils and Assemblies, Studies in Church History, 7, Cambridge, 1971, pp.289-309, reprinted in Geoffrey Nuttall, Studies in English Dissent, Weston Rhyn, 2002, pp.33-50.

nonconformist groups. These developments included the drawing up of statements of faith and practice and the beginnings of organisational structure. These developments gathered momentum following the Restoration, as nonconformist groups strove to hold themselves together in the face of persecution and to plan for their long-term survival as millennial expectation diminished. Although the extent and the time-scale varied between groups, all of the nonconformist churches that survived the seventeenth century adopted unity, if not uniformity, of faith and practice within their churches as well as adopting a system of internal organisation and discipline. However, they frequently suffered internal controversy in the process.

Group consciousness expressed in doctrinal unity was demonstrated by the drawing up of creeds or confessions of faith. This led to internal divisions when the theological outlook of some members was at odds with the doctrinal stance of the church, perhaps because those members had joined the church before the adoption of a strict doctrinal position or because their personal theological position had changed since. Collier's adoption of a general atonement theology and Keith's attacks upon Friends' emphasis upon the inner light are examples. Admittedly, Friends used confessions only for apologetic purposes and creeds not at all. However, their doctrine of the inner light was the essential tenet of Quakerism. It was an equally serious transgression for a Friend to contradict the doctrine of the inner light as it was for a member of another nonconformist church to contradict an essential element of that church's written creed or confession.

Most frequently, internal controversies arose from the struggle to introduce unity of religious belief and church practice, due to differences of interpretation of the teachings of Christ, whether expressed by the Spirit, as Friends and Muggletonians believed, or in Scripture, as other nonconformists believed. Just as Friends did not believe that there could be more than one correct interpretation of the Spirit's teaching, other nonconformists did not believe that there could be more than one correct interpretation of Scripture. During the second half of the seventeenth century, both Baptist churches were particularly affected by controversies occasioned by differences in Scriptural interpretation. The most notable were the Laying on of Hands Controversy and the Particular Baptists' Hymn Singing Controversy.

The Laying on of Hands Controversy, from c.1646

The controversy concerning the laying on of hands upon baptised believers was primarily a General Baptist controversy, although Particular Baptists also experienced some disagreement over the issue. Imposition of hands upon baptised believers was not widely practised among Particular Baptists. However, there were a few Particular Baptists who did support the practice. For instance, in 1655, Thomas Tillam published a pamphlet advocating laying on of hands.[105] By that date, he had

[105] Thomas Tillam, The Fourth Principle of Christian Religion, London, 1655.

introduced the practice to a congregation he had founded at Hexham, so angering members of the neighbouring Newcastle congregation that they prevailed upon the London congregation of which Tillam was a messenger to disown him and 'all that are in the practice of laying on of hands'.[106] Particular Baptist, Benjamin Keach, who had probably adopted the practice during his General Baptist days, defended imposition of hands upon baptised believers against Henry Danvers's attack upon it in his 1674 A Treatise of Laying on of Hands.[107] Keach's response, Darkness Vanquished, was reissued in 1698 under the new title of, Laying on of Hands upon Baptized Believers, which contained a reply to an anonymous treatise concerning laying on of hands, published in 1691.[108]

The disagreement over the imposition of hands concerned interpretation of the fourth of the six foundation principles laid down in Hebrews 6:1-2, 'laying on of hands'. Some believed that the practice intended here was a laying on of hands upon all baptised believers following baptism, as a form of confirmation. However, their opponents believed that this passage required laying on of hands for a different purpose,

---

[106] Underhill, Records, pp.295. It should not be assumed that his advocacy of the imposition of hands was the sole reason for Tillam's disownment as he held other unorthodox opinions, including Sabbatarianism.

[107] H. D'anvers, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands, London, 1674; B[enjamin] K[each], Darkness Vanquished, London, 1675. General Baptist, Thomas Grantham, also published a reply to Danvers: Thomas Grantham, The Fourth Principle of Christ's Doctrine Vindicated, London, 1674. A Treatise was not Danvers's earliest attack upon the practice, as he was one of the signatories of 'Questions about Laying on of Hands', to which John Griffith responded in 1655: John Griffith, Gods Oracle and Christs Doctrine, London, 1655, p.37.

[108] B[enjamin] K[each], Laying on of Hands, London, 1698, pp.105ff.

although they were not themselves in agreement about what that purpose should be.

Danvers, quoting an anonymous 'eye and ear witness' claims that the division began around 1646 when Mr. Cornwell, a Baptist minister from Kent, preached the necessity of the laying on of hands to a Baptist congregation in London.[109] He convinced several members that 'those that were not under laying on of hands were not babes in Christ and had not communion with God', whereupon they submitted to the practice and refused to communicate in church ordinances with any that did not submit to laying on of hands.[110] Danvers is referring to developments within the General Baptist church and it is clear that General Baptists were affected by division from the early 1650s if not before. For example, the records of the General Baptist congregation at Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire, show that this congregation had adopted the practice by late 1652, as it is reported that John Denne and Edmund Mayle answered an errant member's query about the practice in November of that year.[111]

By 1653, the controversy had become so serious that General Baptists resorted to print to argue their case either for or against the laying on of hands upon baptised believers. It is clear that those who opposed this form of laying on of hands did so because they did not believe that Scripture

---

[109] This was probably Francis Cornwell: Ernest A. Payne, 'Baptists and the Laying on of Hands', BQ, New Series, 15 (1953-1954), pp.203-215.
[110] H. D'anvers, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands, pp.57-59.
[111] Underhill, Records, p.31.

explicitly commanded it.[112] Their opponents, however, believed that there was adequate Scriptural precedent for the practice, particularly the example in Acts 8:17 of Peter and John laying hands upon baptised Samaritans.[113]

Those who opposed the imposition of hands upon all baptised believers differed over the nature of the laying on of hands commanded in Hebrews 6:1-2, believing it to be one or more of the other forms of imposition of hands practised among Baptists. Samuel Oates, for example, believed that it was for healing the sick, ordaining officers and for receiving the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.[114] However, the author of Of Laying on of Hands, believed that the imposition of hands intended was for ordination of officers.[115] Thomas Morris asserted that the imposition of hands intended by Hebrews 6 was subjection to persecution at the hands of wicked men.[116]

Proponents of the imposition of hands upon all baptised believers were quick to note these differences.[117] However, they were not entirely agreed among themselves concerning the purpose of the practice. Benjamin Morley argued that it was to put baptised believers into a further capacity of going on to

---

[112] Thomas Morris, A Messenger Sent to Remove some Mistakes, London, 1655, [Epistle, p.3].
[113] John Spittlehouse, A Confutation of the Assertions of Mr. Samuel Oates, London, 1653, p.2.
[114] Spittlehouse, A Confutation of the Assertions of Mr. Samuel Oates, p.1.
[115] Of Laying on of Hands, London, 1656, pp.6-7. This pamphlet has been attributed to John Gosnold, presumably following comparison with a later work by the same author, published several years after his death: John Gosnold, A Discourse Concerning Laying on of Hands, 2nd edn., 1701.
[116] Morris, A Messenger Sent to Remove some Mistakes, pp.32, 36-37.
[117] William Rider, Layings on of Hands Asserted, London, 1656, pp.134-135. This pamphlet is a reply to Of Laying on of Hands.

perfection, to complete their subjection to the principles of the foundation and to demonstrate their love to Jesus Christ. He also noted that he did not believe that it was for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.[118] Others agreed that imposition of hands was not for receipt of extraordinary gifts but many believed that it was for the receipt of the ordinary gifts of the Spirit.[119] It was clear to their opponents that they were divided over whether they believed the practice was for ordinary gifts, extraordinary gifts or confirmation:

> They make more ends of their one laying on of hands than of the several kinds of layings on of hands in the New Testament.[120]

The wrangling over Scriptural interpretation was not the only important element of this controversy. What made this such a divisive issue was the refusal of the opposing parties to allow fellowship with one another. Although, in 1656, the Fenstanton congregation learned of a congregation in Rutland where those who opposed the practice refused communion to those who accepted it, it was usually the proponents of imposition of hands upon baptised believers who refused communion to those who would not adopt the practice.[121] In 1653, the Fenstanton congregation received a letter from the congregation at Westby in Lincolnshire enquiring why they allowed communion to those 'that are against the fourth principle, viz., the laying on of hands on all baptised persons'. Fenstanton answered:

---

[118] Benjamin Morley, Vindication of that Righteous Principle, London, 1653, pp.37, 39-41, 43.
[119] Griffith, Gods Oracle and Christs Doctrine, p.41.
[120] Of Laying on of Hands, pp.11-13.
[121] Underhill, Records, pp.202-206.

> because we judge them faithful in the Lord, although ignorant in that particular; and it is written, "him that is weak in faith, receive".[122]

However, neighbouring congregations were not as lenient as Fenstanton. On a visit to Wisbech in 1656, Edmund Mayle disagreed with John Lupton and Joseph Wright of Lincolnshire on this issue:

> they declared that those that were under laying on of hands ought to separate from those that were not under it, and have no communion with them. About this we had much conference…so that this unexpected difference put, for the present, a stop to the business intended.[123]

The following year, the General Assembly declared communion with those who rejected the practice to be unlawful.[124]

It is clear that this refusal of fellowship was highly resented by those who rejected the practice. As the author of Of Laying on of Hands declared:

> We had not set pen to paper, had there not been such a violent imposition upon the churches of your imposition of hands, as to make it an essential to communion.[125]

Indeed, this remained a source of great resentment for many years. During the late 1660s, an anonymous book entitled, 'A Search for Schism' was published.[126] Although the book is no longer extant, its contents may be gleaned from the answers it

---

[122] Underhill, Records, pp.60-62, 68-70.
[123] Underhill, Records, pp.142-143.
[124] Payne, 'Baptists and the Laying on of Hands', BQ, New Series, 15 (1953-1954), pp.203-215.
[125] Of Laying on of Hands, p.14.
[126] John Griffith, The Searchers for Schism Search'd, n.p., 1669, p.1.

provoked, John Griffith's The Searchers for Schism Search'd and Thomas Grantham's A Sigh for Peace.[127] The authors of 'A Search' complained that their opponents did not recognise them as a truly constituted church of Christ and refused communion with them. The reply came that those who practised imposition of hands could not have communion with those who did not, nor could they regard them as a truly constituted church, because the latter were deficient in a foundation principle of Christ's doctrine. To the proponents of imposition of hands, this was not a minor issue that may be left to the discretion of the individual congregation. Moreover, to allow communion would be to open the door to more errors:

> A known error is not to be suffered nor tolerated in the church of God; for by the same rule, one may, more may, till the church be fuller of stinking weeds, than choice flowers; and what will the weeds do, but eat out the living and thriving virtue of the flowers.[128]

It is not clear when the controversy finally fizzled out, although the publication of pamphlets relating to the issue during the 1690s and early 1700s shows that disagreement continued into the early eighteenth century. The controversy was clearly the result of the Baptists' struggle to determine the correct interpretation of a Scriptural text; in this case, Hebrews 6:1-2. Thus, it demonstrates the difficulties experienced by nonconformists in abandoning the authority of the Established Church. They now had to determine sound

---

[127] Thomas Grantham, A Sigh for Peace, n.p., 1671.
[128] Griffith, The Searchers for Schism Search'd, pp.4, 38-39.

doctrine for themselves rather than having it decreed for them by the Established Church. That the growth of group consciousness also contributed to the division is demonstrated by the General Baptists' refusal to leave it to the individual congregations to determine their own definition of the Scriptural text. Despite their belief in the autonomy of the individual congregation, when it came to correct doctrine, they simply could not give each other the liberty to decide. They felt constrained to force their own interpretation upon their co-religionists or else to have nothing to do with them.

Hymn Singing Controversy, 1690-1698

The other major seventeenth-century controversy which demonstrated the divisive consequences of the development of denominational consciousness was the 1690s Particular Baptist controversy over congregational hymn singing. This controversy again demonstrated that disagreement over Scriptural interpretation could be just as divisive among Scripturally-guided churches as disagreement over interpretation of the leadings of the inner light could be among Friends. As Isaac Marlow, the most vocal opponent of congregational hymn singing, observed:

> That which is most unhappy to many saints who sincerely labour for, and long after the perfect union of the Church of Christ, is, that we cannot all attain to one

> and the same conception of the mind and will of God revealed to us in the holy Scriptures.[129]

There was a small amount of General Baptist involvement in the controversy. William Russel presumably witnessed the Particular Baptists dividing over the issue and could not resist joining in the attacks upon a practice which he believed was unwarranted by Scripture and which he hoped to dissuade members of his own church from adopting.[130] More surprising was Joseph Wright's contribution. General Baptists generally opposed any singing in worship but Wright wrote in defence of it, although he did state his belief that the psalms contained in Scripture should have pre-eminence over other hymns or spiritual songs.[131]

Although the issues of contention will be examined in greater detail, only a brief outline of the events of this controversy will be given here as Murdina MacDonald has provided a full account of the controversy and the pamphlets exchanged.[132] The disagreement broke out in Benjamin Keach's congregation in Horsleydown, London. During the 1670s, Keach

---

[129] J.M. [Isaac Marlow], A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing, London, 1690, p.3.

[130] Russel's contribution to the controversy was William Russel, Some Brief Animadversions upon Mr. Allen's Essay, London, 1696. He also wrote the epistle to Richard Claridge's answer to Richard Allen, noting that he and is associates decided not to print a large portion of Claridge's book because much of it 'appeared to us to be different from those common principles of Christianity we profess': R[ichard] C[laridge], An Answer to Richard Allen's Essay, London, 1697, [Epistle, pp.2-3]. This was because Claridge had defected to Quakerism.

[131] Joseph Wright, Folly Detected, London, 1691, p.16.

[132] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', pp.49-76. MacDonald bases much of her account upon that recorded in the church book of the Maze Pond congregation, which was founded by the opponents of singing who seceded from Keach's congregation. She lists the pamphlets exchanged during this controversy, pp.387-391.

had introduced hymn singing there at the Lord's Supper and at services of thanksgiving. Hearers had been allowed to join in the singing with the brethren and sisters of the congregation and no members of the congregation had ever complained, at least according to Keach's account.[133] However, dissension arose in March 1691 when the congregation voted to have singing every Sunday.[134]

MacDonald has pointed out that Marlow, the most vocal opponent of congregational singing, probably was not a member of Keach's congregation, although his wife and members of her family were. However, she suggests that Marlow coached the group of dissidents in that congregation.[135] This certainly seems likely, as Marlow had begun to print against congregational hymn singing before it became a point of contention within Keach's congregation. On 21 October 1691, the nine men among the twenty-four opponents of singing in Keach's congregation were excommunicated. The women remained within the congregation for a while but, in late 1692, all twenty-four joined with the Cripplegate congregation before covenanting to form their own congregation in February 1694. They eventually settled at Maze Pond.[136]

---

[133] Benjamin Keach, The Breach Repaired, London, 1691, p.viii. To this is attached B. Keach, An Answer to Mr. Marlow's Appendix, London, 1691.
[134] 'A Brief Detection of Several Falsehoods'. This is signed by the nine male members of Keach's congregation who opposed congregational hymn singing. It is printed in Isaac Marlow, Truth Cleared, pp.30-43, which is attached to Isaac Marlow, Truth Soberly Defended, London, 1692.
[135] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', pp.52, 58.
[136] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', pp.59, 62, 69, 83.

Had the disagreement over singing been confined to Keach's congregation, it might never have become a serious division. However, a bitter pamphlet war was initiated with the publication of Marlow's A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing in 1690. Such was the personal animosity of the written exchanges between Marlow and Keach that, in 1691, it was decided that a committee of six should be appointed to resolve their mutual accusations of misrepresentation, by inspecting Marlow and Keach's books. However, this came to nothing when Keach and Marlow failed even to agree upon the methods that the inspectors should use.[137] In fact, Keach seems to have contributed little to the controversial literature after 1691 but others rallied to the cause of congregational singing. For instance, Richard Allen published two pamphlets in 1696, An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms and A Brief Vindication.[138] Others joined Marlow in condemning congregational singing. In An Epistle, Robert Steed argued the anti-singing case much more succinctly than Marlow and provoked an answer endorsed by seventeen Baptist elders and ministers.[139]

---

[137] Isaac Marlow, Truth Cleared, pp.5-14. Truth Cleared contains a transcript of Keach's unpublished paper, 'A Sober Appeal for Right and Justice', as well as letters exchanged by the two men.

[138] Richard Allen, An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms, London, 1696; Richard Allen, A Brief Vindication of an Essay, London, 1696.

[139] Robert Steed, An Epistle Written to the Members of a Church in London, London, 1691; Thomas Whinnel, A Sober Reply to Mr. Robert Steed's Epistle, London, 1691, [Epistle, p.2]. MacDonald attributes A Sober Reply to Keach, presumably because Keach was suspected of having a hand in its writing. However, it is Whinnel who, in the manner of the authors of similar works, put his signature to the preface explaining the purpose of the book. Keach's signature only appears amongst those to the epistle endorsing the book. Therefore, it seems more probable that Whinnel wrote the majority of the text himself, quite possibly with input from Keach and others.

As MacDonald observes, the singing issue eventually involved almost the entire leadership of the London Particular Baptist community on one level or another. She also notes that it is symptomatic of the split in the community that the two most prominent members of the 1689 Particular Baptist general assembly, William Kiffin and Hanserd Knollys, found themselves on the opposite sides of the debate.[140] Indeed, MacDonald argues convincingly that the failure of the Particular Baptist general assembly to deal with the singing issue was largely responsible for its demise after 1693. The reasons MacDonald gives for this demise are very interesting. She notes that, virtually from its inception, the assembly appears to have been confronted with fears that it would in some way endanger the independence of the congregations.[141] This then, is another example of the difficulty in resolving differences faced by churches which recognise the autonomy of the individual congregation. MacDonald also notes that the assembly's emphasis on a fund to educate ministers signalled to many that human learning was being glorified over spiritual attainments as preparation for ministry.[142] This mirrors one of the difficulties experienced by Friends in their attempts to establish schools, mentioned in the previous chapter. Moreover, in the case of both Friends and Particular Baptists, this demonstrates the divisive potential of the institutionalisation inherent in the development of group consciousness.

---

[140] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', pp.62-63. Kiffin opposed congregational singing in William Kiffin, Robert Steed, George Barrett and Edward Man, A Serious Answer to a Late Book, London, 1692, whereas Knollys was one of the first to refute Marlow's arguments: H[anserd] K[nollys], An Answer to a Brief Discourse, London, 1691.
[141] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', p.69.
[142] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', p.69.

The singing controversy, MacDonald argues, was the 'coup de grace' for the fledgling general assembly:

> It was the London elders who had provided the initiative for the assembly. Their badly divided ranks effectively destroyed the capacity of Calvinistic Baptists as a whole to establish a national organisation at this time.[143]

Clearly the controversy over congregational hymn singing was a very damaging one. There were probably a number of elements to the disagreement which made it so divisive.

Congregational hymn singing was virtually unprecedented in English Protestant worship. Therefore, its introduction inevitably provoked charges of innovation. An anti-singing pamphlet of 1696, The Axe at the Root of the Innovation of Singing, not only made that very charge in its title, but also expressed the fear that allowing singing may open the door to further innovations in worship.[144] With its association with the hated 'Laudian Innovations' of the early seventeenth century, the term, 'innovation', was considered highly derogatory among nonconformists. It has been seen in the earlier chapters, that

---

[143] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', p.69.

[144] The Axe at the Root, London, 1696, [title page], p.7. The author of this pamphlet is identified merely as 'a Baptist'. MacDonald claims that Marlow implies that he is the author of this pamphlet: MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', p.71. However, this seems to be a misinterpretation of Marlow's words. Whilst, in the passage MacDonald cites, Marlow does note the publication of The Axe at the Root, when he says, 'leaving the rest as sufficiently answered in what I have said before', he is almost certainly referring to his own earlier works against singing: Isaac Marlow, The Controversie of Singing Brought to an End, London, 1696, p.28. It seems most unlikely that Marlow would publish an anonymous tract when he put his name to the other pamphlets he published on the subject. Moreover, the concise style of The Axe at the Root contrasts markedly with the verbosity of Marlow's pamphlets.

the opposing sides in the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Quaker controversies exchanged the charge of innovation. It was a difficult charge to disprove. Friends had generally tried to do so merely by returning the charge upon their opponents. Keach, anticipating the charge, was no better placed to answer it. He resorted to pleading for open-mindedness:

> If any of you should say, "How can we be satisfied to have communion with the church, when we believe [singing] 'tis an Innovation?" (That's a hard word) Are you infallible? Is there not ground for you to fear you are mistaken, or to think in the least 'tis a doubtful case…[145]

Another reason why this controversy was so divisive was that the opponents of congregational singing feared that the practice threatened the purity of church communion because it forced the godly to unite their voices with those of the world, the hearers. MacDonald argues that this was the primary objection of those who left Keach's congregation and eventually settled at Maze Pond.[146] This was the fourth of five objections listed by the seceders and Marlow's pamphlets also reveal this concern.[147] However, this was certainly not the only ground of Marlow's objection to hymn singing, nor does it appear to have been among the key objections of the other anti-singing writers.

---

[145] Keach, The Breach Repaired, p.ix.
[146] MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists', p.53.
[147] Maze Pond Church Book, 1691-1708, Angus Library, MS, fo.44; Marlow, The Controversie of Singing, p.27.

Echoing the Wilkinson-Story party's objection to the authority of women Friends' business meetings, one of the key objections to hymn singing related to the issue of women's participation in worship. If the whole congregation was to sing together, then that would mean that women would not be silent in the church. According to Colossians 3:16, singing was seen as a means of teaching and admonishing. Thus, for women to be allowed to sing was seen as tantamount to allowing them to teach in the church. The opponents of singing therefore saw congregational singing as a contravention of St. Paul's prohibitions concerning women's participation, as stated in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12.[148] The proponents of singing answered this by pointing out that, if women were to remain completely silent in the church, they would be unable to give an account of their conversion before the congregation, which was an essential element of admittance to membership.[149]

Another important element of the controversy related to the essential principles of nonconformity. One of the key features of nonconformity was the rejection of human, imposed forms and the quest for purity of worship. In advocating hymn singing, Keach and his supporters breached this principle in two ways. Firstly, congregational hymn singing necessitated the use of set forms of words and composed tunes. This, his opponents argued, was will-worship; a human invention at least as reprehensible as using set-form prayers. Indeed, they believed it was liable to open the door to the use of such

---

[148] Marlow, A Brief Discourse, p.21.
[149] Keach, The Breach Repaired, p.139; Wright, Folly Detected, p.42.

formalised prayers.[150] It is notable that some of those who supported congregational singing believed that Scriptural psalms were infinitely preferable to the composed hymns that Keach used.[151]

The second way in which the proponents of congregational singing were deemed to breach their nonconformist principles, or rather their Baptist principles, was in claiming a liberty to determine the circumstantial elements of worship. Answering a query about whether singing should be in prose or verse, Richard Allen asserted:

> I see no reason to determine for either of these, exclusive of the other. For this, as well as many other circumstantial things in the worship of God, being not particularly determined in the Scripture, must be left to every church of Christ, and the ministers thereof, to use that method which they judge will be most for edification.[152]

Allen was merely asserting the right of the individual congregation to determine the adiaphora of worship. However, one of the problems inherent in the type of organisational structure which grants this liberty to the individual congregation is the difficulty of determining what is and is not a circumstantial element. Clearly Allen's opponents did not believe that the mode of singing was a circumstantial because they believed that congregational singing, according to any mode, was proscribed by Scripture. Thus, they believed that the

---

[150] Steed, An Epistle, pp.1, 14.
[151] Allen, An Essay, pp.58-61.
[152] Allen, An Essay, p.73.

proponents of singing were abandoning the Baptists' strict adherence to Scripturally-based worship and introducing innovations in the manner of the church of Rome and other 'ceremony-mongers'.[153]

Again, disagreement over Scriptural interpretation was central to the controversy. Keach believed that congregational hymn singing was a holy ordinance, commanded by Scripture. 'In a word, singing is enjoined', he declared.[154] By contrast, the opponents of congregational singing believed that there was no Scriptural precedent for the practice. The main Scriptural texts cited as commands to sing were Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16 and James 5:13. Further Scriptural precept was provided by the personal example of Christ singing at the last supper, as described in Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26, and of Paul and Silas singing in prison, described in Acts 16:25. In each case, the text leaves room for differences in interpretation. Because this was a debate over congregational singing, much discussion concerned the question of whether or not the singing of more than one person at a time was justified. Certainly, it could legitimately be argued that this was implied but, because it was neither explicitly stated nor explicitly denied, neither side could prevail upon the other to accept its interpretation. Since the English translation of the Bible failed to determine the matter, the Greek was consulted. This merely resulted in an inordinate amount of pamphlet space being given over to

---

[153] Russel, Some Brief Animadversions, pp.54-55.
[154] Keach, The Breach Repaired, p.vii.

wrangling over whether the Greek word, 'hymnos', referred to singing or praising.[155]

There were certainly flaws in the arguments of both sides. Keach, perhaps realising that his Scriptural arguments were somewhat flimsy, argued that singing the praise of God was a moral duty; that the light of nature would have enjoined mankind to sing even if there had been no written law to that effect.[156] This of course enabled Marlow to point out that his opponents were unable to find sufficient Gospel evidence to justify their practice.[157] Marlow also left himself open to attack and ridicule by arguing that the essence of singing is spiritual rather than vocal.[158] This provoked Keach to declare:

> You have said more to justify the Quakers' silent meetings than you are aware of…by this way of reasoning, there is no more need of the poor body to glorify God in his worship.[159]

It also incited Whinnel to proclaim:

> …absurd nonsense is it to talk of singing in the heart without the voice. Methinks I cannot but admire that any man of common understanding should expose to the view of the world, such nonsensical, gross absurdities to justify his long neglect of a holy ordinance of God.[160]

---

[155] The texts and definitions are debated in Marlow, A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing, pp.4ff. and Keach, The Breach Repaired, pp.5ff. The later pamphlets tend to reiterate or elaborate upon the contents of these two.
[156] Keach, The Breach Repaired, p.29.
[157] Marlow, The Controversie of Singing, p.27.
[158] Marlow, A Brief Discourse, pp.5-7.
[159] Keach, The Breach Repaired, p.14.
[160] T[homas] W[hinnel], An Appendix, Or, a Brief Answer, p.11. This is attached to S.W., J.C., J.L., Truth Vindicated; or Mr. Keach's Sober Appeal, London, 1691. It is also attached to Wright, Folly Detected, pp.77-88.

The resort to somewhat absurd arguments was undoubtedly due to the difficulty of actually proving either point of view from Scripture. It is therefore not surprising that the issue of congregational hymn singing was such a divisive one. The Particular Baptist general assembly was powerless to resolve the controversy. Scripture had proved to be no clearer determinant of correct religious practice than the inner light and, even if its members had been agreed among themselves over the issue, the assembly lacked the authority to impose a determination of the controversy.

Adoption of a System of Internal Organisation and Discipline

The Laying on of Hands Controversy and the Hymn Singing Controversy show how the attempt to adopt unity of faith and religious practice within a nonconformist group could result in internal division. The development of group consciousness was also manifested in attempts to establish a system of internal organisation and discipline within each nonconformist group. The leaders of the nonconformist churches saw this as a necessary means of holding their churches together as coherent religious groups, particularly in the face of persecution and the realisation that an imminent end to the world was unlikely. This was demonstrated by the adoption of modes of discipline, the concept of membership and the establishment of academies, regional and national associations and assemblies or, in

Friends' case, a hierarchical network of meetings. However, the introduction of these measures could provoke disagreement.

The emergence of leaders was potentially problematic in itself. Generally, as among Friends, the early leaders of the other nonconformist groups tended to emerge naturally. They tended to be people who had manifested their spiritual gifts in preaching, disputing and writing in defence of their faith. These were often charismatic individuals who inspired people to follow them. However, the examples of James Nayler and Laurence Clarkson show that leadership challenges could and did arise. The lack of reference in Friends' minute books to any procedure of selecting leaders indicates that natural emergence remained the means by which individuals came to prominence among Friends even after the establishment of hierarchical organisation. By contrast, as the other nonconformist groups became more organised, they developed systems to enable them to select the officers of their congregations. Independent and Baptist officers were chosen by the members of the congregations. The Fenstanton General Baptist records for 1656 give an excellent description of the selection process.

The congregation observed a day of fasting before two companies of about six people were sent out to deliberate on the selection of an elder. In the instance described, both groups independently nominated Christopher Marriatt. The congregation indicated their consent by a show of hands. Presumably in the hope of promoting peace within the congregation, the other elders then examined Marriatt 'touching

his judgement in many necessary things, especially those things which are matters of controversy in many congregations'. He was then ordained by the other elders. The same process was used to elect three teachers but each of the two groups sent to deliberate about deacons nominated two different people. Therefore, the selection of two deacons was made by casting lots.[161]

Baptist officers were generally selected from within their own congregation, whereas Independent and Presbyterian congregations chose ministers who had been trained in their academies. As noted above, ministers of Presbyterian congregations were less likely to be selected by the whole congregation. Presumably, the participation of the whole congregation in choosing its ministers minimised the possibility of disharmony between minister and congregation. However, when irreconcilable differences did arise, members could seek a release from their own congregation to join a neighbouring one. Alternatively, the congregation may divide into two. In those churches which believed in the autonomy of the individual congregation, a congregation could split without either half actually having to leave the church. This was not possible within the Quaker system of organisation. Because the local meetings were not autonomous, a divided Particular Meeting would have to lay its difference before its Monthly or Quarterly Meeting and agree to abide by its decision. The only alternative was for disaffected members to leave the Society.

---

[161] Underhill, Records, pp.187-190.

The adoption of the institutions of organisation could provoke internal division due to the limitations it placed upon the spiritual freedom of the individual. In fact, most of the nonconformist groups, because they recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation, did not experience serious internal division in establishing their organisational structure. By contrast, the hierarchical structure of the Society of Friends imposed the church's authority over individual Friends in their local meetings. The ensuing resentment manifested itself in the Wilkinson-Story Controversy.

Disputes Between Nonconformist Groups

It has been shown that the adoption of unity of faith and practice and of organisational institutions, which resulted from the development of group consciousness, could occasion division within the post-Restoration nonconformist groups. It will be seen that the growth of denominational consciousness could also accentuate the differences between the nonconformist groups. This was manifested in disputes between the different groups.

As like-minded individuals came to recognise themselves as a coherent group united by a specific set of beliefs, so they became increasingly aware of the differences between themselves and the members of other nonconformist groups. This was a natural part of the development of denominational

identity. It has been noted above that, towards the end of the seventeenth century, the individual groups became more accepting of the validity of the other nonconformist churches. However, this was not the case earlier in the century. During the interregnum and the early decades of the post-Restoration period, the different nonconformist groups increasingly sought to assert their own identity; to distance themselves from the other groups and what they perceived to be the errors of those groups.

Evidence of the desire of the different churches to distance themselves from each other is illustrated by the Particular Baptists' disagreement over mixed communion during the 1670s and 1680s. The 1677 Particular Baptist confession recognises that the church was not united in its opinion on this matter:

> the known principle and state of the consciences of divers of us, that have agreed in this confession is such that we cannot hold church-communion with any other than baptised believers, and churches constituted as such; yet some others of us have a greater liberty and freedom in our spirits that way.[162]

Although this confession demonstrates a desire to put aside differences on the subject, it is clear from the pamphlet exchanges that some members of the Particular Baptist church had very strong feelings on the matter. They were concerned for purity of religious practice within their own church and,

---

[162] Particular Baptists' Confession of 1677, transcribed in W.J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, Baptist Historical Society, London, 1911, p.287.

hence, for dissociation from nonconformists whose practice they viewed as less pure.

John Bunyan is undoubtedly the most well known of the ministers of the handful of Particular Baptist congregations which admitted 'unbaptised' people to communion.[163] Indeed, A.C. Underwood notes that this is why both Congregationalists and Baptists have since claimed Bunyan as a member.[164] In 1673, Bunyan complained of sixteen to eighteen years of 'continual assaults' upon his brethren by 'the rigid Brethren' who opposed mixed communion.[165] This indicates that Particular Baptists had been urging him to distance his congregation from the impurities of other nonconformists since the late 1650s. Bunyan defended his stance, arguing that baptism is not a church ordinance and does not make one a member of the church or a visible saint:

> Baptism will neither admit a man into fellowship, nor keep him there, if he be a transgressor of a moral precept.[166]

His opponents, however, remained unconvinced. Danvers declared that Bunyan 'under pretence of pleading for truth, introduceth heinous error'.[167] Kiffin argued that admitting 'unbaptised' people to communion was contrary to both Scripture and the practice of the early church.[168] That his concern was to

---

[163] Because they did not recognise the validity of infant baptism, Baptists regarded anyone who had not been baptised as an adult believer, as 'unbaptised'.
[164] Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, p.104.
[165] John Bunyan, Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion, London, 1673, p.8.
[166] Bunyan, Differences in Judgment, pp.13-15.
[167] H[enry] D[anvers], A Treatise of Baptism, London, 1673, p.42.
[168] W[illiam] Kiffin, A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion, London, 1681, Chapters 3 and 4.

distance the Particular Baptist church from the perceived impurities of the other nonconformist groups is demonstrated by his fear that mixed communion would bring many 'unregenerate' members into the church.[169]

The desire of nonconformist groups to distance themselves from the errors of the other groups was more clearly manifested in the public disputes, both oral and written, which took place between them. These disputes tended to serve a couple of purposes, both of which relate to the development of denominational consciousness. They were a symptom of membership rivalry; both as a means of winning converts and as an attempt to prevent adherents from being won over to another group. In dissociating a group from the perceived errors of others, disputation was also an attempt to improve the public image of the group, in the hope of reducing persecution. Other nonconformist churches were clearly no less concerned about their public image than Friends were.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe any of the controversies between different nonconformist groups in detail. Therefore, a few examples will be considered only in so far as they demonstrate the development of group consciousness. The key factor which demonstrates that public disputes between groups were largely a symptom of the development of group consciousness, is the fact that they emphasised the differences between the groups. They were not intended primarily as a means by which different groups might explore each other's

---

[169] Kiffin, A Sober Discourse, p.7.

theological position, nor was there any desire to seek common ground between groups. The early disputes between General and Particular Baptists have been mentioned above. The two Baptist churches were not seeking to unite because of their common rejection of infant baptism. Rather, they had become aware of what distinguished them from each other. Thus, they disputed over their theological differences concerning the atonement.

Similarly, Friends engaged in a number of bitter disputes with the other nonconformist groups. Geoffrey Nuttall has argued that Quaker belief was largely in line with the current interest in the Holy Spirit but was a carrying forward of developments which had taken place in early, radical Puritanism. Yet, throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, Friends and other nonconformists were bitter enemies.[170] Ted LeRoy Underwood has likewise argued that, although the views of Friends and Baptists were completely antithetical on some subjects, in many cases the difference was merely one of emphasis. Both, to varying extents, recognised the authority of both the Spirit and the Bible.[171] However, Friends and Baptists engaged in numerous bitter oral disputations and exchanged a large number of virulent pamphlets. Arthur Langley lists 32 public disputations between Friends and Baptists during the seventeenth century. He notes that this exceeded the number of disputations between Baptists and ministers of the Established Church, which he reckons at

---

[170] Nuttall, Holy Spirit, pp.150-151.
[171] Underwood, 'The Controversy', p.2.

25.[172] T.L. Underwood notes that, during the seventeenth century, Friends published 83 pamphlets against Baptists and Baptists published 49 against them.[173] Clearly these attacks upon each other were occasioned by the realisation of the differences between them. They were not seeking points of agreement.

Moore has argued that, during the post-Restoration period, Friends became more concerned to plead for liberty of conscience and that Friends and Baptists became aware of common cause and were more reluctant to confront one another publicly.[174] However, an improvement in relations between the two should not be overstated. That they campaigned for liberty of conscience did not mean that the different nonconformist groups genuinely wished to extend such liberty to each other. Indeed, their internal disputes demonstrate a reluctance to extend it even to those of differing opinions within their own churches. Generally, it was not the intention of post-Restoration nonconformists to bring persecution upon their opponents. However, they were not prepared to leave them at peace in their perceived errors. Whilst both Langley and T.L. Underwood's accounts reveal a lull in oral and printed disputation between Friends and Baptists during the persecution of the 1660s, there was a resurgence during the 1670s.[175] This coincides with the period of increasing nonconformist

---

[172] Arthur S. Langley, 'Seventeenth-Century Baptist Disputations', TBHS, 6 (1918-1919), pp.216-242.
[173] Underwood, 'The Controversy', p.53.
[174] Moore, The Light, pp.219-220.
[175] Langley, 'Seventeenth-Century Baptist Disputations', TBHS, 6 (1918-1919), pp.216-242; Underwood, 'The Controversy', p.52.

confidence mentioned above and may be seen as a reassertion of denominational identity. T.L. Underwood has noted that Friends and Baptists, both General and Particular, published more than twice as many tracts against each other following the Restoration than they had produced before it.[176] Moreover, Friends did engage in controversies with other nonconformist groups during the 1660s.

Muggletonians and Friends disputed both in person and in print from the late 1650s, throughout the 1660s and beyond.[177] The two groups would have found very little common ground between them even if they had been inclined to look for it. Although most did not deny the physical, historical Christ, Friends emphasised the inner light, whereas the Muggletonians recognised a physical God, about five feet tall. Muggleton declared that Friends were mistaken in every true point of doctrine, whilst Friends denied Muggleton's claimed spiritual commission.[178] As Farnsworth declared, 'thou art no chosen witness of the spirit of truth, neither hast thou received any commission from Christ'.[179] Both in print and in person, the exchanges between the two groups were invariably bitter and, as

[176] Underwood, 'The Controversy', p.53.
[177] Some of the most notable post-Restoration pamphlets exchanged by these two groups included, Muggleton, The Neck of the Quakers Broken; G[eorge] F[ox], Something in Answer, London, 1667; Lodowick Muggleton, A Looking-Glass for George Fox, n.p., 1667; W[illiam] P[enn], The New Witnesses Proved Old Hereticks, n.p., 1672; Lodowick Muggleton, The Answer to William Penn Quaker, London, 1673. For an account of the hostile relations between Friends and Muggletonians during the late seventeenth century, see Douglas G. Greene, 'Muggletonians and Quakers: A Study in the Interaction of Seventeenth-Century Dissent', Albion, 15 (1983), pp.102-122.
[178] Lodowick Muggleton, A Letter sent to Thomas Taylor, Quaker, n.p., 1665, p.5.
[179] Richard Farnsworth, Truth Ascended, London, 1663, p.1.

discussed above, frequently resulted in the Muggletonians pronouncing sentence of eternal damnation upon the Friends.

Another example of a Quaker dispute which shows how anxious nonconformists could be to put aside their similarities and focus upon their differences, was that between George Whitehead and Presbyterian, Stephen Scandret. According to Friends' account, the two men held a public dispute in Essex on 20 January 1669. Scandret reportedly asserted that Scripture was the only rule of life but was also forced to confess the light within. However, upon doing so, he evidently lost his nerve, retracted his acceptance of the inner light and called for a second dispute.[180] At the second dispute, on 1 July 1669, Scandret and his associates frequently made commotion and interrupted Whitehead. Before Whitehead had finished debating the issue of the inner light, Scandret apparently tried to change the subject to focus upon the question of water baptism, an issue upon which Friends and Presbyterians were more clearly divided.[181]

As in the disputes between Scandret and Whitehead, both the inner light and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper were the most common issues that Friends debated with Independents and Baptists. Friends' belief in the inner light raised a number of issues, most notably, the question of the sufficiency of the inner light in the soteriological process,

---

[180] Robert Ludgater et al., The Glory of Christ's Light Within, n.p., 1669, p.4. This pamphlet includes an attack by George Whitehead upon the Calvinist predestinarian theology, 'as held by Presbyterians and some others', pp.40-47.
[181] Ludgater et al., The Glory of Christ's Light Within, pp.7-8.

its possible ability to confer perfection during life, the conflict between Scripture and the inner light as the touchstone or rule of life and the potential for a belief in the inner light to lead to a rejection of the humanity of Christ. These were the points at issue during the controversy which occasioned the greatest exchange of pamphlets between Friends and Particular Baptists during the seventeenth century; the controversy instigated by Thomas Hicks during the 1670s.

T.L. Underwood has given a detailed account of this controversy and the pamphlets exchanged.[182] In summary, controversy arose when Hicks challenged George Whitehead to a public debate. The debate eventually took place in 1672 at Devonshire House, London, and was followed by the publication of Hicks's, A Dialogue Between a Christian and a Quaker, in 1673. A series of three further public meetings followed in August and October 1674. The Quaker speakers included Whitehead, Penn, Keith and Ellwood and the Baptist speakers included Hicks, Jeremiah Ives and Thomas Plant. Hostility appears to have been exacerbated by accusations against Hicks of misrepresenting the Quaker position. Although the debates were intended to provide a forum for Hicks to answer these accusations and for debate concerning the person of Christ, Underwood reports that little doctrinal discussion was accomplished. Much time was wasted with interruptions and arguments concerning debate procedure.[183] As was so often the case, the controversy moved from public confrontation to

---

[182] Underwood, 'The Controversy', pp.46-52.
[183] Underwood, 'The Controversy', p.49.

pamphlet warfare, with the exchange of around thirty pamphlets by 1675.

The hostility and petty wrangling displayed demonstrates that there was no genuine desire to seek an accommodation between the two sides. The intent of each group was to disprove the position of their opponents or, failing that, to limit their opportunity to defend that position. However, there was clearly sufficient doctrinal discussion for observers to go away with some idea of where each group believed that the other stood concerning the inner light. It was the Particular Baptists' attacks on Friends at these public meetings which inspired the Hertford Independent, William Haworth, to launch his own attack on Friends' perceived rejection of the humanity of Christ:

> That which gave the occasion of my thoughts pitching upon this subject matter, viz. Christ's manhood in Heaven, was that dispute betwixt Mr. Hicks and Mr. Penn, at London, concerning the same. I being there present, am satisfied by the Quakers' fallacious management of that discourse that they deny the same numerical, true and real manhood of Christ in Heaven, as a place remote from us.[184]

In fact, Haworth had already begun to launch his own attacks upon Friends before the disputes between the Particular Baptists and Friends led him to emphasise this particular point of contention. In The Quaker Converted, of 1674, Haworth had questioned the role of the inner light in the soteriological

---

[184] W.H. Christophilus [William Haworth], An Antidote Against that Poysonous and Fundamental Error of the Quakers, London, 1676, [Epistle, p.1].

process and accused Friends of subordinating the authority of the Scriptures to that of the inner light, of claiming perfection in this life and so forth.[185]

That it was not only Friends and their opponents who demonstrated an awareness of the differences between them during the post-Restoration era, is evidenced by the failure of Independents and Presbyterians to reach a lasting accommodation. In drawing up the Heads of Agreement, they had attempted to put their differences to one side. As Jones has observed, the status of synods, their composition and powers, lay preachers and the place of the congregation in the life of the church were issues which had caused acute controversy in the recent past, yet the agreement slid over them with an ominous facility.[186] Thomas has described the disagreement over Arminianism and Antinomianism and the demise of the 1691 Happy Union.[187] Disunion became complete amongst London Dissenters when the Independents withdrew from the Common Fund and established the Congregational Fund in 1695. The end of the union followed much more slowly in other parts of the country.[188] Whilst they recognised the similarities between them to a larger extent than any of the other nonconformist groups, the Independents and Presbyterians ultimately focused upon the differences between them. The Presbyterians had been so much slower than the other groups to develop a denominational

---

[185] William Haworth, The Quaker Converted to Christianity, London, 1674, pp.67-68. For a full account of the dispute between Haworth and Hertford Friends and the pamphlets exchanged, see Adams, 'The Body in the Water', Chapter 4.
[186] Jones, Congregationalism in England, p.113.
[187] Thomas in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, Chapter 4.
[188] Thomas in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, p.121.

awareness. However, even they were sufficiently aware of what they were, or at least of what they were not, that they were unable to find union with either the Established Church or other nonconformist groups.

Survival or Decline

It has been argued that there were different types of organisation and authority among the nonconformist groups of the seventeenth century. It has also been shown that the nature of a group's system of organisation and structure affected its ability to deal with the internal disagreements that resulted from the development of group consciousness. It will be argued that the characteristics of the different models of church government also affected the ability of the various churches to survive as coherent religious groups. It has been noted above that numerical decline and diminution of spiritual fervour has been observed among the nonconformist groups during the post-toleration period. Some of the groups which survived the persecution of the post-Restoration period did not survive the post-toleration era without the loss of their post-Restoration identity.

A group organised according to the monocratic leadership model is likely to decline numerically once the leader has died, as there is no centre of authority to hold the group together. In the case of the Muggletonians, there was no organisational structure to perform this function either. By

contrast, Friends' hierarchical structure ensured that they were not adversely affected by the death of Fox. The loss of the spiritual leader is also likely to result in the spiritual decline of the group because the source of religious enlightenment has been removed. It seems likely that this would be particularly true of the Muggletonians because there was no claimed successor to Muggleton's commission and because Muggletonians rejected worship. Lamont has noted a significant numerical decline among Muggletonians during the one hundred years following the death of Muggleton and, even more so, thereafter. Nonetheless, Muggletonianism made it into the twentieth century with a handful of adherents, the last of whom died in 1979. Lamont attributes the demise of the sect to its refusal to evangelise.[189] That Muggletonianism declined is not surprising. That it survived for so long despite its refusal to proselytise and, most especially, the failure of either Reeves or Muggleton to rise from the dead as prophesied in Revelation, is frankly astounding.

In churches where the individual congregations enjoy autonomy, there may be a decline into heretical opinions because the church lacks the authority to stamp out heretical opinions as they arise. Because diversity is inherent within this model, these groups are more likely to be subsumed by other religious movements. These points are illustrated by the increasing prevalence of Socinianism among both the General Baptists and the Presbyterians during the early eighteenth century, culminating in Presbyterianism eventually becoming

---

[189] Lamont in Hill et al., Muggletonians, pp.1-2.

subsumed by Unitarianism.[190] However, because of the comparative freedom enjoyed by members of some of the churches organised according to this model, they may be less prone to spiritual stagnation and more able to adapt to changing external situations. Whilst none of the nonconformist groups of this period avoided decline, it may have been the Independents' earlier emphasis upon the congregation, rather than the church or the minister, which enabled them to embrace the evangelical revival of the mid-eighteenth century.

Groups which adopt the hierarchical system of church government have the cohesion to hold themselves together during periods of difficulty. The case of the Society of Friends shows that this was not necessarily due to coercion. The advice of the London bodies, particularly the Meeting for Sufferings, and the system of communication inherent in this structure made Friends more aware of how they could reduce their sufferings. This system of communication from the head to the members also serves to reinforce denominational identity. Groups organised according to this model are therefore more likely to maintain their identity and less likely to be drawn aside by other religious movements. However, particularly if they insist upon strict doctrinal uniformity, these groups may be prone to spiritual decline because there is no openness to new ideas. This in turn may lead to a numerical decline because the urge to proselytise is lost. It has been argued in the previous chapters that Friends did not insist upon strict doctrinal

---

[190] The course of developments by which Presbyterianism became merged with Unitarianism is described by Short in Bolam et al., English Presbyterians, Chapter 6.

uniformity. However, leading Friends' control of the press had the same effect because it prevented the dissemination of radical ideas. Indeed, Friends did lose their earlier spiritual fervour. During the eighteenth century, they became increasingly introspective. As Braithwaite observes:

> The Quaker Church…was now mainly concerned with preserving its own quiet way of life; and, driven in on itself by storms of persecution and by the growth of a narrowing discipline, was no longer aflame with mission to the world…The Society indeed yearned for quiet; but when the Georgian years of ease came, they would be years of outward respectability and inward spiritual decline.[191]

In addition to the three models of church organisation and authority described above, there is a fourth model; the unstructured gathering. In groups which belong to this model, the emphasis tends towards individualism. They have little or no sense of group identity and therefore lack organisational structure, unity of belief and practice and they frequently recognise no external basis of spiritual authority. The Seekers and the Ranters belong to this model. Little is known for sure about these people but they do not appear to have been coherent groups.[192] Therefore, they presumably were not rent by internal divisions. Instead, individuals followed their own disparate paths, allying themselves with different groups or congregations as and when the Spirit moved them. Since these loose gatherings lacked the cohesion to survive persecution,

---

[191] Braithwaite, Second Period, p.179.
[192] McGregor in McGregor and Reay, eds., Radical Religion in the English Revolution, p.122.

the issue of surviving toleration never arose. Indeed, they died out so quickly that some historians have questioned their very existence. J.C. Davis has argued that there was no Ranter movement, sect or theology and that Ranters were an invention of the press, a projection of society's fears.[193]

Although they had more of a sense of group consciousness than Ranters and Seekers, the Fifth Monarchists also belong to this category. As Bernard Capp has argued, Fifth Monarchists were never a sect:

> They differed sharply over soteriology, the sacraments, the Sabbath, political and social issues, and the nature and timing of the millennium. Links between the groups were often flimsy, and personal animosities could run high. Yet they felt some sense of collective identity, and contemporaries recognised an ideological core in their self-appointed mission to hasten the millennium.[194]

Whilst they had some sense of themselves as a group, the Fifth Monarchists' failure to survive can be largely attributed to their lack of a clear denominational awareness and to their central belief in an imminent millennium. Due to these factors, they did not adopt the organisational institutions that other nonconformist groups introduced. They had always had close associations and joint meetings with other groups so, without this structure to hold them together as a coherent group, they

---

[193] J.C. Davis, Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians, Cambridge, 1986, p.124. McGregor is one of several historians who have repudiated Davis's theory: J.F. McGregor in 'Debate, Fear, Myth and Furore: Reappraising the "Ranters"', Past and Present, 140 (1993), pp.155-164.

were ill-placed to survive persecution and were easily subsumed by other movements. As Capp argues, within a decade of the Restoration, most joined more conventional nonconformist groups.[195] Their millenarianism also contributed to their demise. Because this was their central tenet, Fifth Monarchists naturally lost adherents as millennial hopes gradually dwindled following the disappointment of the Restoration.

Conclusion: The Nature of Nonconformist Internal Controversy

It has been demonstrated that the adoption of unity of faith and organisational structure, occasioned by the development of group consciousness, led to divisions within the nonconformist groups of the post-Restoration era and earlier. The growth of denominational consciousness was also manifested in a heightening of awareness of the differences between the various groups. This resulted in the frequently bitter disputes between them. It has also been seen that the nature of a group's structure of organisation and authority affected its susceptibility to internal divisions as well as its ability to overcome or survive them. These same factors also had some bearing on a group's ability to survive the challenges of persecution and toleration.

From this examination of the internal controversies of other nonconformist groups, it is clear that Friends' internal controversies shared certain characteristics with those of the

---

[194] Bernard Capp in 'Debate, Fear, Myth and Furore: Reappraising the "Ranters"', Past and Present, 140 (1993), pp.164-171.
[195] Capp, The Fifth-Monarchy Men, pp.224-225.

other groups, particularly the Baptists. Most notably, as in the case of Quaker controversy, the internal divisions of other groups were often related to the interpretation of their accepted authoritative guide. In rejecting the authority of the Established Church, most nonconformists had turned to the authority of the Bible. Friends had turned to the authority of the Spirit. The Muggletonians had also turned to the authority of the Spirit, but manifested only in their two prophets rather than in the inspiration of the individual. Just as Friends' internal controversies largely resulted from differences of interpretation of the guidance of the inner light, other nonconformists' internal controversies largely resulted from differences of interpretation of Scripture.

Some other similarities are also observable. In most of the cases described above, controversy was instigated or occasioned by strong-minded, leading members of the church; often charismatic individuals. It has been argued in the previous chapters that this was the case in the Quaker internal controversies of this period. That it was also true of other nonconformist groups is demonstrated by the examples of Clarkson, Caffyn and Collier. Such people alone had sufficient spiritual reputation either to lead a challenge against the church or for the other leaders of the group to experience difficulty in taking action against them.

The internal controversies of the various nonconformist groups also displayed a dislike of change. Controversy frequently arose as a result of the introduction of changes to

the faith, practice or organisation of the religious group. The charges of innovation exchanged by Quaker dissidents and leading Friends has been noted, as also the accusations of innovation made against Keach for introducing hymn singing to Particular Baptist worship.[196] The accepted practice of each nonconformist group was believed to be rooted in the authority of the Bible or the Spirit. The charge of innovation was a serious one because it recognised the imposition of something which added to or contradicted that accepted practice and thus challenged the authority upon which it was based. Other similarities between the internal controversies of Friends and those of other groups include a concern for the public image of the church and disagreement over women's participation.

Although there were certain similarities between the internal controversies of Friends and those of other seventeenth-century nonconformist groups, there were also a couple of significant differences. It has been seen that the system of discipline employed in dealing with errant individuals, on a local basis, by Quaker meetings and nonconformist congregations was very similar. Both possessed the power to excommunicate individuals or very small groups of offenders. However, differences became apparent when divisions extended beyond the bounds of a single congregation or Monthly Meeting.

---

[196] An enlarged version of a paper discussing Quaker internal controversy as a reaction against innovation, which I presented to the Quaker Studies Research Association's October 2001 conference, has recently been published: Clare J.L. Martin, 'Tradition Versus Innovation: The Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies', Quaker Studies, 8 (2003-2004), pp.5-22.

Because of the authoritarian organisational structure, dissident groups of Friends would become separated from or be disowned by the entire church. Whilst they tended to continue to view themselves as Friends, the Quaker church refused to regard them as such and the hierarchical system enabled their rejection to be communicated to the entire church so that no one would countenance the dissidents. By contrast, within those nonconformist groups which recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation, there was more likely to be division between congregations. However, dissident groups were unlikely to be excommunicated from the entire church. The General Baptist division over the laying on of hands illustrates this most clearly. Most of those who adopted the imposition of hands refused to have communion with those who rejected the practice. However, those congregations which rejected the practice were not excommunicated. They continued to hold communion with each other and also with congregations which regarded them as deficient in that single respect but, nonetheless, members of the General Baptist church.

Friends and other nonconformist groups also differed in their attitude towards dissident members. Within those groups which recognised the Bible as the supreme source of authority, opponents were seen to have misinterpreted Scripture. This was certainly regarded as blameworthy and sufficient grounds for refusing communion. However, because of their belief in the immediate guidance of the Spirit, Friends tended to believe that their internal opponents had not merely misinterpreted the

guidance of the inner light. They had been guided by a wrong spirit. This was regarded as utterly reprehensible and led to condemnation not only of the individuals themselves, but also of the spirit which had moved them. Of course, the dissidents themselves believed that they had been guided by the inner light. Thus, they viewed the condemnation of themselves as a condemnation also of the inner light. This brought an extra bitterness to the controversy.

Both of these differences between Friends and the less authoritarian groups are most clearly demonstrated in the written exchanges occasioned by internal controversies. The pamphlets exchanged by members of other nonconformist groups did not lack bitterness. Certainly, personal animosity is evident. However, the pamphlets exchanged by opponents within these groups do not approach those exchanged by Friends, in terms of either virulence or volume. The controversy which came closest to doing so was the Particular Baptist Hymn Singing Controversy of the 1690s. Nearly 30 pamphlets were exchanged. This exceeds the number exchanged during the Hat Controversy, which took place during the persecution of the 1660s, when printing was a more dangerous activity for nonconformists than it was during the 1690s. However, it is less than the number of pamphlets exchanged during the, admittedly longer-lived, Wilkinson-Story Controversy and does not approach the 200 plus pamphlets of the Keithian Controversy. The lengthy Laying on of Hands Controversy saw the publication of a little over a dozen pamphlets, including the Particular Baptist contribution.

Whilst the pamphlets exchanged during other nonconformist internal controversies included personal reflections, accusations of innovation and the suggestion of popery, they generally lacked the charges of apostasy which characterised those of Friends' internal controversies. It would be wrong to suggest that the internal disagreements of other nonconformist groups were never fiercely contended or that they did not cause serious disruption to internal fellowship. However, it does appear that the theology and authoritarian organisation of the Society of Friends brought an extra degree of animosity and divisiveness to its internal disagreements.

CONCLUSION

The issue of authority was central to the internal controversies of post-Restoration Quakerism and to those of other seventeenth-century nonconformist groups. Rejecting the traditional authority of the Church of England compelled nonconformist groups to adopt new sources of spiritual authority to fill the void. However, this led to internal disagreements. Whilst Friends adopted the inner light as their primary source of authority, most other nonconformist churches looked to Scripture as their principal guide. In both cases, internal differences arose over the interpretation of the guidance of the authoritative source.

The persecution of the early post-Restoration period, and the gradual diminution of eschatological expectation among Dissenters, forced nonconformist leaders to look to the long-term survival of their religious groups and accelerated the development of corporate identity within the different churches. This was manifested in the different groups by their adopting unity of religious belief and practice as well as systems of organisation and authority. However, the decision-making process inherent in this process of institutionalisation resulted in disagreements within the various nonconformist groups. This was largely due to the difficulty of interpreting the guidance of the authoritative source concerning matters of belief, practice and organisation. The growth of group

consciousness also exacerbated tensions between the different nonconformist churches.

The degree of a Dissenting group's propensity to internal division was largely determined by the nature of its structure of organisation and authority. This thesis has identified three main categories of post-Restoration nonconformist group: those controlled by a monocratic leader, those which recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation and those which adopted a hierarchical system of organisation and authority. The Society of Friends belonged to the third category, that of churches with a hierarchical structure. This classification of different types of nonconformist group provides a useful basis for comparison between the Society of Friends and other groups. This is because churches organised according to the three models experienced not only differing levels of internal division, but also varying degrees of success in resolving controversies, or at least in surviving them without significant loss of numbers or of group identity.

Among Friends, internal divisions stemmed from the disparity between the Quaker belief in the freedom of the inner light to inspire the individual, on the one hand, and the practical need to bring an element of control to the Society, on the other. If Friends were to survive as a coherent group, action needed to be taken to curb the excesses of early Quaker enthusiasm and individualism. Unchecked, enthusiasm and individualism were intrinsically divisive and also aroused such public hostility that Friends were likely to be persecuted to

extinction. The activities of James Nayler and his followers, in 1656, had demonstrated these dangers. Thus, leading Friends recognised the need to impose the authority of the group over the individual. However, their attempts to do so provoked resistance from those Friends who viewed this as abandoning the fundamental principles of Quakerism.

The Hat Controversy, initiated by John Perrot during the early 1660s, was a reaction against early attempts to subjugate individual Friends to the authority of the group. Although Perrot and his supporters focused their attacks upon male Friends' practice of removing their hats for prayer, this was merely the most visible symbol of the developing formalism to which they objected. Friends had generally come to believe that the inner light would manifest its guidance through the 'sense' of a group of assembled Friends. Moreover, even by the 1660s, it had become widely accepted among Friends that some were imbued with greater spiritual authority than other Friends were. Perrot and his associates objected to these developments. They challenged the notion that any Friend had the authority to judge the spirit of another and defended the fundamental Quaker belief in the power of the light to inspire the individual. They saw the obligation upon all male Friends to remove their hats for prayer as a direct contradiction of this belief that the individual should act only as immediately guided by the inner light.

Perrot represented the spirituality and enthusiasm of early Quakerism. His concern was to abandon self and to give

himself over entirely to the guidance of the light. The long-term survival of Quakerism, the avoidance of physical suffering and so forth were of no concern to him. However, the political situation had forced most leading Friends to adopt a more pragmatic outlook. To them, concern for the public image of Quakerism was of paramount importance because, only by improving the public perception of Quakerism, could they hope to reduce persecution. Severe persecution threatened the survival of Quakerism, as Friends would be lost and potential recruits deterred. As eschatological expectation among Friends diminished or became internalised, concern for the survival of Quakerism increased. Unity among Friends was also essential if they were to survive as a coherent group. Thus, the division occasioned by Perrot's challenge was seen to endanger the future of Quakerism. Leading Friends' concerns were further heightened by the presence of some of Nayler's erstwhile followers among Perrot's supporters. Therefore, Perrot's challenge served to confirm leading Friends' fears of enthusiastic individuals and accelerated the development of the imposition of corporate authority over individual Friends.

In the wake of the Hat Controversy, George Fox established a hierarchical system of men's and women's business meetings. His aim was to bring unity to the Society of Friends and to prevent further internal divisions, by bringing Friends everywhere under the control of leading Friends in London. Although it was primarily Friends' behaviour and practice that Fox and other leading Friends sought to control, Morning Meeting's control over Friends' publications ensured that

enthusiastic belief would gradually abate. Again, leading Friends' concern was for the public image and long-term survival of the Society of Friends. However, the hierarchical organisational structure was highly authoritarian. It provoked a great deal of resistance and resentment from those Friends who recognised this as a further limitation upon the freedom of the inner light and a further imposition of corporate authority over the conscience of the individual. From the early 1670s, the Wilkinson-Story Controversy was the most serious manifestation of this dissatisfaction.

Because Fox had played such a key role in establishing the system of business meetings, the Wilkinson-Story Controversy, to a much greater extent than the Hat Controversy, was characterised by resentment of Fox's personal authority. Examination of the controversy both nationally and in the localities, reveals that there was a difference of emphasis between the complaints of Wilkinson-Story leaders and those of rank and file Friends in their local meetings. The leading protagonists objected primarily to the imposed authority of Fox and other leading London Friends over local meetings and over the Society as a whole. However, at the local level, it was the authority of women's business meetings, particularly in the matter of marriage, that was especially resented. Quaker women enjoyed far greater freedom to participate in preaching and worship than their counterparts in other denominations. However, subjecting both male and female Friends who wished to marry to the scrutiny of women's business meetings was too much for seventeenth-century male sensibilities. Indeed, such was

the importance of this issue to the controversy that serious division was experienced only in those districts where women's business meetings were given this authority.

Leading Friends were at times prepared to demonstrate leniency towards those with a genuine conscientious objection to the authority of women's business meetings, rather than see them bring the Society into disrepute by marrying in an Anglican church. However, the same concern for the public reputation of Quakerism ensured that Wilkinson-Story leaders who publicly attacked the authority of Fox and the London bodies were condemned in severe terms. Morning Meeting's control over Friends' publications facilitated the efficient answering of Wilkinson-Story pamphlets. The hierarchical system of business meetings enabled leading Friends to distribute their answers and to advise Friends not to countenance the separatists. Thus, leading Friends were able to limit the spread of the Wilkinson-Story Controversy. Nonetheless, it is likely that there were many more Friends who shared Wilkinson and Story's concerns than actually followed them into division. The emotional, social and even financial price of separating from the main body of Friends could be high. The uncompromising attitude of both sides also hindered resolution of the division. In some parts of the country, separatist meetings continued to be held into the early eighteenth century.

The issue of the inner light was also central to the Keithian Controversy, which began during the early 1690s. However, in this case, it was leading Friends who sought to

defend the authority of the inner light against the restrictions that George Keith tried to impose upon it. Whilst Friends generally valued the Bible, they believed the direct inspiration of the inner light to be of greater authority. Because the inner light was also of more immediacy to them, Friends also tended to emphasise it, rather than Scripture, in their preaching. Keith believed that, through neglect of Scripture, Friends had come to undervalue the physical, historical Christ. Indeed, he felt that many denied the humanity of Christ and could not, therefore, be regarded as Christians. These were the same charges that Friends' external opponents had been making against them for decades. Keith sought to guard against such doctrinal errors by asserting the authority of the Bible and by emphasising the role of the physical Christ in the soteriological process. He urged Friends to adopt a written creed and to insist upon a public confession of faith as a condition of Quaker membership. Keith saw their refusal to do so as evidence of serious doctrinal errors among Friends.

Keith published accounts of Friends' perceived errors, which he had discovered in their earlier works. These printed attacks were potentially very dangerous to Friends because they exposed genuine weaknesses and inconsistencies in Quaker theology. Because the supposed errors concerned the rejection of the humanity of Christ, Friends might have lost the freedom to worship which they had been granted under the 1689 Toleration Act, as Socinians had been specifically excluded from the protection of the Act. Certainly, Keith's pamphlets

provoked a flurry of anti-Quaker publishing. That Friends were very worried about the damage to their public image, occasioned by Keith's attacks, is shown by the fact that they condemned Keith, not for his doctrinal position, but for bringing Friends into disrepute. However, despite their concern for the public image of Quakerism, leading Friends did not resort to adopting a creed as a means of ensuring doctrinal soundness and uniformity among Friends. They were not prepared to force the consciences of individual Friends concerning the intricacies of belief. This was a limitation upon the freedom of the inner light that they would never accept. The lack of a written creed made it difficult for Friends to resolve internal disagreements concerning doctrine. However, the authoritarian system of business meetings was an effective means of imposing a determination of differences. Since outward unity was more important to Friends than strict doctrinal uniformity, a written creed was considered neither necessary nor desirable.

Today, Friends still reject the use of written creeds. A recent survey by Rosamund Bourke indicates that most Friends believe that 'creedal statements of belief may act to close off new religious experiences'.[1] In other words, creeds are still seen as a restraint upon the freedom of the Spirit. The effects of Friends' continued refusal to adopt a written creed are still felt today. Indeed, it could be said that George Keith's fears are now being realised for, today, Friends disagree over whether or not it is necessary to be a Christian to be a

---

[1] Rosamund Bourke, 'Quaker Beliefs: Diverse yet Distinctive', Quaker Studies, 7 (2002-2003), pp.227-238.

Quaker. Pink Dandelion has argued that only about fifty percent of Friends may now be considered Christians. Indeed, of 692 Friends surveyed, he discovered that only three-quarters definitely believed in God and that just over three percent definitely did not.[2] Not only are there increasing numbers of Friends who belong to non-Christian faiths, particularly Buddhism, but also it is becoming less uncommon for Friends to have no belief in God at all. In 1999, a concerned Friend expressed his fears:

> In thirty years' time the membership of the Society will need to be described by terms such as ethical, humanist, secular. By then only a minority will affirm personal experience of the living power of the Spirit of God in their daily lives.[3]

Friends' refusal to compromise their religious principles by imposing creedal affirmation, even during the uncertainty of the early years of toleration, illustrates an interesting point about Quaker internal controversy. The external pressures to which Friends were subject during the course of the late seventeenth century do not seem to have been reflected in the controversies. The Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies took place against a background of changing fortunes for nonconformists and changing Quaker attitudes to the rest of society. However, these changes did not affect the

---

[2] Pink Dandelion, A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: The Silent Revolution, Lampeter, 1996, pp.167, 174, cited in Bourke, 'Quaker Beliefs: Diverse yet Distinctive', Quaker Studies, 7 (2002-2003), pp.227-238.

[3] Alistair Heron, Our Quaker Identity: Religious Society or Friendly Society?, Kelso, 1999, p.1.

manner in which Friends tackled their internal divisions. The Hat Controversy took place during the severe persecution of the early Restoration period. This was a time when the Society of Friends was very insular and regarded the rest of English society with deep suspicion. The government viewed Friends in much the same light, as the 1662 'Quaker Act' most clearly demonstrates. Anglican ministers and other anti-Quaker writers sought to convince the English public that Friends were dangerous fanatics or papists in disguise, whilst Friends' unusual language and behaviour led their local neighbours to consider them peculiar at best. Leading Friends were seeking to improve the public image of Quakerism, as a means of reducing persecution, and to impose the authority of the church over the individual, as a means of surviving persecution. However, these considerations did not lead Friends to play down the controversy or to deal with it discretely. Despite the dangers of printing at that time, a few leading Friends took Perrot and his supporters to task in print.

The Wilkinson-Story Controversy began during a time of increasing nonconformist confidence. Friends and other nonconformists were feeling more secure in their identities, as demonstrated by the high level of public religious disputation between the different churches during the 1670s. Relations between Friends and their neighbours were much improved. However, it happened to be at the time of the Exclusion Crisis of the early 1680s and the ensuing escalation of persecution that the Wilkinson-Story Controversy developed into heated pamphlet warfare. Clearly, the external pressure of persecution

did not influence William Rogers to delay the publication of his attacks until a less politically dangerous time. That Friends continued to be concerned for their public image, regardless of the political situation and regardless of relations between themselves and the rest of society is demonstrated by their concern to answer the printed attacks of Rogers, Keith and other internal and external opponents. By the time of the Keithian Controversy, the Society of Friends was again becoming more insular but their manner of dealing with internal dissidents had not changed. The volume of pamphlets exchanged during the Keithian Controversy shows that Friends again had no desire to deal quietly with internal division.

The explanation for the apparent indifference to changing external factors displayed by contending Friends is simple. Internal division was a matter of conscience. Dissidents initiated controversy because they had a conscientious objection to developments within Quakerism. Their consciences would not allow them to wait for a politically or socially convenient time to voice their objections, nor would they allow the method of their protest to be tempered by such outward concerns. Likewise, leading Friends felt conscience bound to respond to dissidents' attacks, regardless of external factors. They also had the added concern that leaving dissidents' criticisms unanswered could damage the public image of Quakerism, thereby worsening the external situation, and that their failure to act would diminish their authority within the Quaker church. Thus, Quaker internal controversy appears to have followed its natural course, regardless of the social and

political background in which Friends found themselves at the time.

Comparisons with other seventeenth-century nonconformist groups show that most were no less prone to internal divisions than Friends and that there were certain characteristics common to the internal controversies of most post-Restoration nonconformist groups. For instance, internal divisions often resulted from the introduction of perceived innovations in church organisation or practice; developments which either added to or contradicted the early practice of the group. Also, it was usually prominent, charismatic members of the group who initiated controversies. They alone had the force of personality and spiritual reputation to lead a significant challenge to the leadership of the group. A further common factor, illustrated by the Wilkinson-Story Controversy and the Particular Baptist Hymn Singing Controversy, was disagreement concerning the participation of women.

Such comparisons also demonstrate both similarities and differences in the nature and handling of the internal divisions of the authoritarian, hierarchical Society of Friends and those of nonconformist groups with different structures of organisation and authority. The Muggletonians belonged to the . model of church organisation which recognised the authority of a monocratic leader. It is interesting to compare Friends with the Muggletonians because both emerged at around the same time, the early 1650s, and both differed from the majority of Dissenters because they looked primarily to the authority of

the Spirit, rather than Scripture. Their earliest adherents also tended to come from similar religious backgrounds; notably those Seekers who had failed to find spiritual satisfaction in any of the more Scripturally based groups.

By the early post-Restoration period, the organisational differences between these two groups were clear and this was reflected in their internal divisions. Laurence Clarkson's challenge shows that groups controlled by a monocratic leader might be prone to direct leadership challenges. Clarkson clearly hoped to replace Lodowick Muggleton as leader of the church. That he was unsuccessful shows that Muggleton had succeeded in exerting his personal authority over the group; something which he would probably have been unable to do if his church had approached the numerical strength or geographical distribution of Quakerism. However, the fact that this direct challenge did arise contrasts with the experience of Friends in the post-Restoration period. During the 1650s, James Nayler had been seen as a direct challenger to George Fox's leadership. However, whilst the disaffected Friends of the post-Restoration period challenged the actions of the Quaker leadership and the personal authority of Fox, they did not seek to replace Fox themselves. Unlike Muggleton, Fox was not a monocratic leader. He was supported by a number of other leading Friends whom he trusted and with whom he shared power. These were men who had risen to prominence as a result of their actions in defending and promoting Quakerism but who, unlike Nayler, recognised Fox's spiritual authority and did not challenge it. Therefore, simply to replace Fox would not ensure that dissidents' ends

were achieved. Moreover, the hierarchical system of organisation and communication underpinned the authority of Fox and other leading Friends at all levels. Thus, a direct leadership challenge would have been unlikely to succeed.

The Muggletonian Immediate Notice Controversy of around 1670 had more in common with Quaker post-Restoration internal controversies. Like the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversies, the Immediate Notice Controversy was a reaction against the imposed personal authority of the group's leading member and perceived betrayal of the group's original principles. However, comparison of the ways in which these divisions were resolved illustrates the differences between the hierarchical and monocratic models of organisation. Leading Friends attempted to resolve internal division by exerting the authority of the church. In the case of the Hat Controversy, this was done through the circulation of the 'Testimony of the Brethren', followed by Fox's establishment of the system of business meetings. In the case of the Wilkinson-Story controversy, the use of the system of business meetings in disownments, communication and control of Friends' writings was the means by which the authority of the church was exerted. During the early stages of each controversy, meetings between the opposing sides were held in the hope that controversy might be resolved through discussion. By contrast, Muggleton allowed no discussion of the issues of contention. He exerted his personal authority by excommunicating and damning his challengers. He had no organisational structure to aid him in this. Nor was he supported by powerful allies within the church because, unlike

Fox, Muggleton was unwilling to share power. Therefore, if the majority of the Muggletonians had not accepted his spiritual authority, he would have been unable to overcome the challenge.

Useful comparisons may also be made between the internal controversies of Friends and those of churches which recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation. General Baptists, Particular Baptists, Independents and Presbyterians belonged to this category. It might seem surprising to find the Presbyterians within this model, rather than within the hierarchical model and they are, indeed, the most difficult group to categorise. Prior to the Restoration, as Presbyterians sought to reform the Established Church from within, the very scale of a national church necessitated a hierarchical structure. However, once they found themselves outside the Established Church, it took them most of the rest of the century to come to terms with their Dissenting identity. Indeed, the only significant Presbyterian internal controversy of the post-Restoration period, the disagreement between 'Dons' and 'Ducklings', was the manifestation of their struggle to settle their identity. During the post-Restoration period, the Presbyterians did not adopt a hierarchical structure and organisation was largely confined to the congregational level. They therefore fit most comfortably into the organisational model which recognises the autonomy of the individual congregation.

It has been seen that internal division was largely the result of the development of group consciousness within the

post-Restoration nonconformist groups. It was chiefly due to the lack of group consciousness among Presbyterians that they experienced few serious internal controversies during the post-Restoration period. Their difficulty in coming to terms with a separatist identity meant that they were very slow to develop institutions of organisation. They therefore escaped the internal disagreement that other groups experienced in their attempts to introduce organisational structure and unity of faith and practice. Thus, the experience of the Presbyterians contrasts markedly with that of Friends, who, during the post-Restoration period, had a very highly developed sense of identity and did suffer serious internal division as they adopted institutions of organisation.

Independents also experienced little internal controversy during the post-Restoration period. However, this was not due to a lack of group consciousness or difficulty in embracing a separatist identity. Independents' lack of internal division was due to the nature of their system of organisation and authority. Because they believed in the autonomy of the individual congregation, they accepted a degree of diversity between congregations. Therefore, differences were less likely to develop into divisions. This differs considerably from the experience of Friends. Although their rejection of creedal affirmation allowed Friends some freedom over the specifics of belief, diversity of opinion regarding Quaker behaviour, discipline and organisation was not tolerated. Dandelion has described this uniformity of practice as a 'behavioural

creed'.[4] From the 1670s, it was enforced by the hierarchical system of business meetings. Because diversity of practice was not permitted, when differences arose, contention could ensue, as demonstrated by conflict surrounding the removal of male Friends' hats during prayer.

Although the Independents avoided serious internal controversy during the latter part of the seventeenth century, this was not true of all churches that recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation. Although both General and Particular Baptists acknowledged this autonomy, their concern for purity of faith and practice led to an intolerance of diversity of Scriptural interpretation. Both General and Particular Baptists suffered internal divisions as a result. The General Baptist Laying on of Hands Controversy is a good example of how internal division could ensue when nonconformist groups' efforts to establish unity of practice resulted in differences of interpretation of the guidance of Scripture. This controversy actually began during the 1640s. However, it is worthy of comparison with post-Restoration Quaker controversy because it continued right through the post-Restoration period and into the early eighteenth century. Also, because the General Baptist group came into existence before the Society of Friends, internal controversy arising from the development of group consciousness began among Baptists at an earlier date than among Friends.

---

[4] Pink Dandelion, 'Schism as Collective Disaffiliation: A Quaker Typology', Quaker Studies, 8 (2003-2004), pp.89-97.

Comparison of the Laying on of Hands Controversy with the Hat and Wilkinson-Story Controversy shows that differences of interpretation over the guidance of Scripture and the guidance of the Spirit could be equally divisive. The longevity of both the Laying on of Hands and the Wilkinson-Story Controversies also demonstrates the difficulty experienced in ending controversies concerning interpretation of the authoritative guide within both churches which adopted a hierarchical structure and those which recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation. However, the outcome of the two controversies differed significantly. Because the role of the General Baptist General Assembly was advisory, rather than authoritative, it could not impose a resolution of the division. Thus, congregations who accepted different interpretations of Hebrews 6 refused to have communion with each other but nonetheless remained within the same church. By contrast, the decisions of the Quaker London Yearly Meeting were regarded as authoritative and were communicated to Friends at all levels via the hierarchical system of business meetings. Thus, it was made clear to all that the separatist meetings were no longer considered part of the Quaker church. This did not bring an end to those separatist meetings but it probably limited the spread of the controversy by discouraging further seceders.

The Particular Baptist Hymn Singing Controversy also illustrates the problem of differences of Scriptural interpretation and the difficulty of resolving such disagreement within churches which recognised the autonomy of

the individual congregation. This controversy began around 1690, very shortly after the Toleration Act was passed. It is therefore contemporaneous with the Quaker Keithian Controversy. These two controversies are interesting because, although the post-toleration period saw the development of better relationships between the different nonconformist churches, these controversies show that this development was not always accompanied by an increased tolerance of diversity within the nonconformist groups. The Hymn Singing Controversy shows that differences of Scriptural interpretation, in this case concerning congregational singing, were sufficient grounds for withdrawal of communion even after the Toleration Act. Indeed, toleration may have contributed to the spread of the controversy in that printing was no longer the dangerous activity that it had been during the decades of persecution. The pamphlet literature of the Hymn Singing Controversy was certainly more voluminous than that of the earlier Particular or General Baptist internal controversies and the Keithian Controversy pamphlet literature was immense.

Like the protagonists on both sides of the Hymn Singing Controversy, Keith championed the authority of Scripture. However, unlike the Hymn Singing Controversy, his division concerned not the interpretation, but the importance, of Scripture. He had come to view Scripture as having greater authority than the inner light; a position which put him at odds with the majority of Friends. In this respect, the Keithian Controversy was very similar in nature to the Particular Baptist controversy surrounding Thomas Collier and

the General Baptist division concerning Matthew Caffyn. Like Keith, both Collier and Caffyn experienced developments in their faith that set them at odds with other members of their church. Comparison of the cases of Keith, Collier and Caffyn most clearly shows the differences in the ability of hierarchically organised churches and churches of autonomous congregations to deal with internal division. Because it recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation, the Particular Baptist church was powerless to take action against Collier unless his own congregation was prepared to excommunicate him. Since his congregation supported him, the church was unable to discipline him, despite the fact that his belief in a general atonement directly contradicted the soteriological position of the Particular Baptist church as a whole. Likewise, because Caffyn enjoyed the support of his congregation, the General Baptist General Assembly was incapable and largely unwilling to condemn him for his Socinian beliefs. The Assembly's inaction led to a huge rift in the church and a general decline into Socinianism. By contrast, the Quaker London Yearly Meeting had the authority to disown George Keith and the system of business meetings ensured that the decision to do so was communicated to Friends throughout England and America. Keith was forced to continue his attacks upon Friends as merely another external critic.

These comparisons between the internal divisions of Friends and other seventeenth-century nonconformist groups show that internal controversy was a common symptom of the process of institutionalisation. In some respects, the hierarchical

structure of the Society rendered Friends particularly prone to internal divisions. Because of the limitation it imposed upon the spiritual freedom of Friends, despite Friends' refusal to insist upon creedal affirmation, the introduction of this hierarchical structure occasioned greater internal disagreement than the introduction of the organisational institutions of other nonconformist groups. The lack of tolerance of diversity of practice among Friends also rendered differences more likely to develop into open divisions than was the case within a group, such as the Independents, that allowed some level of variance between congregations. However, the experiences of both General and Particular Baptists show that some churches that accepted the autonomy of the individual congregation were nonetheless intolerant of diversity and suffered division as a result of the adoption of unity of faith and practice. These groups struggled to resolve internal conflict because there was no superior authority in the church to impose a resolution.

By contrast, among Friends, ultimate authority lay with the central bodies of organisation. The London Yearly Meeting could impose a resolution of controversy and its decisions were enforced at all levels by the hierarchical system of meetings. The Quaker church had the authority to take action against individuals, whole congregations or larger groups. Dissidents could be disowned by the entire church and leading Friends utilised the system of business meetings and the control of the Quaker press to promote the mainstream view. Whilst this was not effectual in regaining dissidents, it was effective in containing division. Monocratic leaders, such as Muggleton,

also possessed ultimate authority within their churches. They too were able to impose a determination of internal controversy. However, such personal oversight and control was only effective on a small scale. It would have been wholly inadequate for governing the tens of thousands of Friends spread across both sides of the Atlantic during the late seventeenth century.[5]

The organisational structure of the Society of Friends was both the most authoritarian of the post-Restoration nonconformist groups and the most efficient in surviving internal divisions. It was also the most effective in ensuring the survival of the church in the face of the external pressures imposed by both persecution and toleration. As with susceptibility to internal division, it was the nature of a nonconformist group's structure of organisation and authority that influenced its tendency to declining membership, diminution of spiritual fervour and loss of identity. Groups which recognise the authority of a charismatic, monocratic leader are prone to numerical and spiritual decline following the leader's death, as illustrated by the gradual decline of Muggletonianism following Muggleton's demise. The Independents, General Baptists and Particular Baptists did develop institutions of communication and organisation to enable them to survive persecution. However, groups that recognised the autonomy of the individual congregation were ill equipped to maintain their religious identity, particularly once the

---

[5] William Braithwaite provides estimates of Quaker numbers during the post-Restoration period: Braithwaite, Beginnings, p.512; Braithwaite, Second Period, pp.457-459.

spiritual fervour of being the persecuted true church receded following the Toleration Act. Because the church lacked the authority to take action against those expressing heretical opinions, the General Baptist church gradually declined into Socinianism. Likewise, Presbyterianism became subsumed by Unitarianism.

By contrast, the hierarchical structure of the Society of Friends served to reinforce the identity of the group, to encourage and exhort members to maintain their religious principles. Whilst Friends did not escape the numerical and spiritual decline which affected all nonconformist groups during the eighteenth century, the authoritarian structure of their church organisation ensured that they maintained their identity. The Society of Friends was not subsumed by eighteenth-century religious movements, such as Unitarianism, nor was it destroyed by internal division.

BIBLIOGRAPHY[1]

PRIMARY MATERIAL

MANUSCRIPTS:

Angus Library, Regent's Park College

Maze Pond Church Book, 1691-1708.

ARO:

Buckinghamshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, 1678-1761.

Hogshaw-House and Biddlesdon Men's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1678-1734/5.

Hogshaw-House and Biddlesdon Women's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1678-1762.

Upperside Women's Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1677-1737.

British Library

MS Add.42505, unpublished writings of Thomas Tomkinson.

CRO:

Huntingdon Monthly Meeting Minute Book, 1672-1723.

Huntingdonshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, Vol.1 (1670-1699) and Vol.2 (1700-1754).

FHL:

A.R.Barclay MSS.

Crosse MSS.

Gibson MSS.

John Penington MSS.

London Six Weeks Meeting Minute Book, Vol.3.

London Yearly Meeting Minute Book, Vol.1 (1668-1693) and Vol.2 (1694-1701).

Meeting for Sufferings Minute Book, Vol.8.

Morning Meeting Book, Vol.1 (1673-1692), Vol.2 (1692-1700) and Vol.3 (1700-1711).

Portfolio MSS.

---

[1] Unless otherwise stated, the place of publication is London.

Spence MSS.

Swarthmore MSS.

HALS — Hertford Monthly and Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, Vol.1 (1668-1683) and Vol.2 (1683-1703).

KRO: — Kendal Book of Condemnations, WDFC/F/1(12).

Kendal Monthly and Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, WDFC/F/1(93).[2]

Kendal Women's Monthly and Quarterly Meeting Minute Book.

WRO — Wiltshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book.

[2] Because both this item and the Book of Condemnations are minute books, their KRO catalogue numbers have been included here to aid differentiation when consulting these manuscripts.

TRANSCRIPTS:

	Epistles from the Yearly Meeting, Vol.1, 1858.
ARO	'An Act for Preventing the Mischiefs and Dangers that may Arise by certain Persons called Quakers, and others, Refusing to take Lawful Oaths', 1662.
BRO:	Reading Men's Monthly Meeting Minute Book.
	Berkshire Quarterly Meeting Minute Book.
	'The Minute Book of Reading Monthly Meeting (Curtis Party) 1668-1716', transcribed by Nina Saxon Snell.
Cadbury, Henry J., ed.	Narrative Papers of George Fox Unpublished or Uncollected, Richmond, Indiana, 1972.
Chandler, J.H., ed.	Wiltshire Meeting House Certificates, Wiltshire Record Society, 40 (1984).
FHL	'The Minute Book of Chippenham Monthly Meeting, 1669-1709', transcribed by Nina Saxon Snell.
Fox, George	The Works of George Fox, Vol.7: The Epistles, Vol.1, State College, PA, 1990.
Frost, Keithian Controversy:	Keith, George et al., 'Some propositions in order to heal the breach', 18 April 1692.
	Minutes of the Philadelphia Meeting of Ministers.
JFHS, 10 (1913)	'Gospel Order and Discipline'.
Locker Lampson, Mrs Godfrey, ed.	A Quaker Post-Bag, 1910.
Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions:	Extract from 'The Unity of the Churches', 1704.
	The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations, 1651.
McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith	1677 Particular Baptist confession of faith.

Mortimer, Russell, ed. — Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1667-1686, Bristol Record Society, 26 (1971).

Nickalls, John L., ed. — The Journal of George Fox, 1952, reprint, 1986.

Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 4 (1909) — Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1690-1699.

Snell, Beatrice Saxon, ed. — The Minute Book of the Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends for the Upperside of Buckinghamshire, 1669-1690, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 1 (1937).

PMHB, 18 (1894) — Hugh Roberts to William Penn.

Underhill, Edward Bean, ed. — Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys and Hexham, 1644-1720, Hanserd Knollys Society, 1854.

Welch, Edwin, ed. — Bedfordshire Chapels and Meeting Houses: Official Registration, 1672-1901, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 75 (1996).

Whitley, W.T., ed. — Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England with Kindred Records, (2 Vols.), Baptist Historical Society, 1909-1910, Vol.1.

PRINTED PAMPHLETS:

The intention is to provide a chronological listing of the extant pamphlets relating to the three Quaker controversies. Because it has not been possible to determine the precise dating of many of the pamphlets, they are listed chronologically according to the year, or estimated year, of their publication but are listed alphabetically, according to author, within each year. As a result, some replies may precede the pamphlet they answer. Only those publications of Bugg, Thomas Crisp and Pennyman cited in the thesis are included in these lists as these controversies were not the primary occasion of their writing against Friends. Pamphlets that are not directly related to the three controversies are listed separately, alphabetically. There has been no attempt to list all of the pamphlets exchanged during the internal controversies of other nonconformist groups; only those cited in this thesis.

PAMPHLETS RELATING THE HAT CONTROVERSY:

1661

[Perrot], John — A Narative of Some Sufferings of J.P. in...Rome, 1661.

1662:

— Perrot Against the Pope, 1662.

Perrot, John — John Perrot's Answer to the Pope's Feigned Nameless Helper, 1662.

_____ — An Epistle for the Most Pure Amity and Unity, n.d.

_____ — To the Upright in Heart, 1662.

P[errot], J[ohn], B[urrough], E[dward], C[rook], J[ohn] and Howgill, Francis — To All Dear Friends and Brethren, n.p., [1662].

1663:

Baily, William — The Lambs Government, 1663.

Burrough, Edward — Two General Epistles, 1663.

Coale, Josiah — A Salutation to the Suffering Seed, 1663.

F[ox], G[eorge] — The Spirit of Envy, Lying and Persecution, 1663.

Harwood, John — To All People that Profess the Eternal Truth, 1663.

Penington, Isaac — Many Deep Considerations, n.p., n.d.

Salt, William — Some Breathings of Life, n.p., 1663.

Storr, Marmaduke et al. — To Friends of Truth in London, n.p., [1663].

1664

Perrot, John — To All Simple, Honest-Intending and Innocent People, 1664.

1665

Farneworth, Richard et al. — Truth Vindicated, 1665.

1666-1669:

Rich, Robert — Love Without Dissimulation, n.p., n.d.

_____ — The Letter Sent by Robert Rych, 1669.

1673-1674:

— The Spirit of the Hat, 1673.

— Tyranny and Hypocrisy Detected, 1673.

Mucklow, William — Liberty of Conscience Asserted, 1673/4.

Penn, William — Judas and the Jews, n.p., 1673.

_____ — The Spirit of Alexander the Coppersmith, n.p., 1673.

Whitehead, G[eorge] — The Apostate Incendiary Rebuked, n.p., 1673.

1678

R[ich], R[obert] — Hidden Things Brought to Light, 1678.

1679

[Fox, George] — Something in Answer to a Book, n.p., 1679.

1680

P[ennyman], J[ohn] — Abstracts of Some Letters written by Mr. Robert Rich, 1680.

1682-1683:

— The Vision of John Perrot, 1682.

Taylor, John — A Loving and Friendly Invitation, 1683.

PAMPHLETS RELATING TO THE WILKINSON-STORY CONTROVERSY:

1676:

Barclay, Robert — The Anarchy of the Ranters, n.p., 1676.

F[ox], G[eorge] — This is an Encuragement to all the Womens-Meetings, n.p., 1676.

c.1677

Bullock, Jeffrey — A Testimony Against the 66 Judges, n.p., n.d.

1680:

Pennyman, John — Some of the Letters which were Writ to George Fox and Others, 1680.

Rogers, William — The Christian-Quaker Distinguished from the Apostate and Innovator, in Five Parts, 1680.

Whitehead, Anne and Elson, Mary — An Epistle for True Love, 1680.

1681:

— The Accuser of our Brethren, 1681.

Batt, Jasper — Truth and Innocency Triumphing, 1681.

C[risp], T[homas] — Babel's Builders, 1681.

_____ — The Testimony of Isaac Penington, 1681.

Lawrence, Thomas — William Rogers's Christian Quaker…Antichristian, 1681.

Penington, John — John Penington's Complaint against William Rogers, 1681.

Penn, William — A Brief Examination and State of Liberty Spiritual, 1681.

Richardson, Richard — A Few Ingredients against the Venom, 1681.

R[ogers], W[illiam] — The Sixth Part of the Christian-Quaker, 1681.

Snead, Richard et al. — An Exalted Diotrephes, 1681.

T[aylor], C[hristopher] — An Epistle of Caution, 1681.

1682:

Bugg, Francis — De Christiana Libertate, 1682.

Ellwood, Thomas — An Antidote against the Infection of William Rogers's Book, 1682.

P[enington], J[ohn] — Exceptions against Will. Rogers's Cavills, 1682.

Rogers, William — The Eighth Part of the Christian-Quaker, n.p., n.d.

_____ — The Seventh Part of the Christian-Quaker, 1682.

Taylor, Christopher — Something in Answer to Two late Malicious Libels, 1682.

Whitehead, George — Judgment Fixed, 1682.

1683:

R[ogers], W[illiam] — A Scourge for George Whitehead, 1683.

Wilkinson, John — The Memory of that Servant of God, John Story, 1683.

1684:

Camme, Thomas — The Line of Truth, 1684.

Coale, Benjamin and Key, Leonard — The Lybeller Carracterizd, n.p., [1684].

Rogers, William — A Second Scourge for George Whitehead, n.p., 1684/5.

1685:

Ellwood, Thomas — Rogero-Mastix, n.p., 1685.

Key, Leonard — Here is a Further Discovery of the Formal Preachers in Reading, n.p., [1685].

Lamboll, William and Buy, John — A Stop to the False Characterizers, [London], 1685.

Loddington, William — The Good Order of Truth Justified, 1685.

1686:

Key, Leonard — A Reply to Part of a Book, n.p. [1686].

Lamboll, William et al. — Something in Answer to Thomas Curtis, n.p., [1686].

Pearson, John et al. — Antichristian Treachery Discovered, n.p., n.d.

1690:

Ellwood, Thomas — The Account from Wickham…Examin'd, n.p., 1689[sic].

Raunce, John — A Memorial for the Present Generation, n.p., [1690].

1691:

Ellwood, Thomas — A Reply to an Answer, 1691.

'J.H.' — An Answer to…a Brief Examination, 1691.

1692:

E[llwood], T[homas] — Thomas Ellwood's Answer, n.p., n.d.

'G.P.' [William Penn] — Just Measures, 1692.

Raunce, John — For G.P. or the Author of…Just Measures, n.p., 1692.

1693:

Coal, Benjamin — A Few Things Proposed as Expedients, n.p., [1693].

Elwood, Thomas — A Fair Examination of a Foul Paper, 1693.

_____ — Deceit Discovered, 1693.

'J.H.' — An Answer to…Just Measurs, n.p., 1693.

Whitehead, George et al. — The Late Expedients Proposed, n.p., [1693].

PAMPHLETS RELATING TO THE KEITHIAN CONTROVERSY:

1692:

A True Copy of Three Judgments, [Philadelphia, 1692].

A Vision Concerning the Mischievous Separation among Friends in Old England, Philadelphia, 1692.

The Christian Faith of the People of God...in Rhode-Island, Philadelphia, 1692.

Budd, Thomas — A Brief Answer to Two Papers, [Philadelphia], 1692.

_____ — A Just Rebuke to Several Calumnies, [Philadelphia], n.d.

Budd, Thomas and Hart, John — A Testimony and Caution, [Philadelphia, 1692].

Budd, Thomas et al. — An Expostulation with Thomas Lloyd, Samuell Jenings, [Philadelphia, 1692].

Keith, George — A Discovery of the Mystery of Iniquity...in Hugh Derborough, [Philadelphia], n.d.

_____ — A Testimony Against that False and Absurd Opinion, [Philadelphia], n.d., reprinted as The Christian Quaker, London, 1693.

_____ — Truth and Innocency Defended, [Philadelphia], n.d.

Keith, George and Budd, Thomas — False Judgments Reprehended, [Philadelphia, 1692].

_____ — The Plea of the Innocent, [Philadelphia, 1692], reprinted as An Account of the Great Divisions, London, 1692.

Keith, George et al. — An Appeal from the Twenty Eight Judges, [Philadelphia, 1692].

_____ — Some Reasons and Causes of the Late Separation, [Philadelphia, 1692], partly reprinted as A Farther Account of the Great Divisions, London, 1693.

1693:

A Confession of Faith in the Most Necessary Things, Philadelphia, 1693.

An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes, [Philadelphia, 1693].

New-England's Spirit of Persecution, [New York], 1693, reprinted as The Tryals of Peter Boss, London, 1693.

Keith, George — More Divisions Amongst the Quakers, 1693. This is an English reprint of The Christian Faith, False Judgments Reprehended and A Discovery of the Mystery.

_____ — The Heresie and Hatred, Philadelphia, 1693.

Whitehead, George et al. — The Christian Doctrine and Society, 1693.

1694:

The Great Doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, 1694.

B[ridgman], R[obert] — Folly and Envy Detected, 1694.

Bugg, Francis — New Rome Arraigned, 2nd, edn., 1694.

C[risp], T[homas] — Animadversions on George Whitehead's Book, 1694.

'D.S.' — An Answer to Several Passages, 1694.

Ellwood, Thomas — An Epistle to Friends, 1694.

_____ — A Further Discovery of that Spirit of Contention and Division, 1694.

'G.W.' — Something by way of Reply, n.p., [1694].

G[ouldney], H[enry] — A Late Libellers Folly, 1694.

Hannay, Robert — A True Account of the Proceedings, 1694.

Jennings, Samuel — The State of the Case, 1694.

Keith, George — A Further Discovery of the Spirit of Falsehood, 1694.

_____ — A Seasonable Information and Caveat, 1694. This includes the reprint of Keith, George, A Loving Epistle, [1694].

_____ — The Arraignment of Worldly Philosophy, 1694.

_____	The Causeless Ground of Surmises, 1694.
_____	The Great Doctrine of Christ Crucified, 1694.
_____	Truth Advanced, [New York?], 1694. To this is attached, A Chronological Account of the Several Ages of the World.
Keith, George et al.	The Judgment Given Forth, 1694. This is an English reprint of A True Copy of Three Judgments, An Appeal and An Expostulation.

1695:

Ellwood, Thomas	Truth Defended, 1695.
'G.C.' and 'E.N.'	Envy and Folly Detected, 1695.
Keith, George	Gross Error and Hypocrisie Detected, 1695.
_____	The Pretended Yearly Meeting, 1695.
_____	The True Copy of a Paper, 1695.
Leeds, Daniel	The Innocent Vindicated, [New York?], 1695.
Owen, Griffith et al.	Our Ancient Testimony Renewed, 1695.
Pennington, John	An Apostate Exposed, 1695.
_____	Certain Certificates...on Behalf of Samuel Jenings, 1695.

1696:

	A Brief Account of a Publick Dispute, n.p., [1696].
	More Work for George Keith, 1696.
	The Proceedings at Turners-Hall, n.p., n.d.
Croese, Gerard	The General History of the Quakers...to which is added a Letter writ by George Keith, 1696.
Ellwood, Thomas	An Answer to George Keith's Narrative, 1696.
Elys, Edmund	Reflections upon Some Passages in G. Keith's Narrative, n.p., n.d.

K[eith], G[eorge] — A Just Vindication of my Earnest Expostulation, 1696.

Keith, George — A Sermon Preached…in Turners-Hall, 1696.

_____ — An Advertisement of a Meeting, n.p., [1696].

_____ — An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall, 1696.

_____ — The Anti-Christs and Sadduces Detected, [1696].

[Leslie, Charles] — The Snake in the Grass, 1696.

P[enington], E[dward] — A Modest Detection, 1696.

_____ — Some Brief Observations, 1696.

Pain, William et al. — The Christian Testimony of Some, Called Quakers, in Reading, 1696.

Penington, John — Reflections upon George Keith's Late Advertisement, 1696.

_____ — The People Called Quakers Cleared by George Keith, 1696.

_____ — Keith Against Keith, 1696.

Pusey, Caleb — A Modest Account from Pennsylvania, 1696.

Story, Thomas and Bealing, Benjamin — Reasons why those of the Quakers, Challenged by George Keith…Refuse their Appearance, 1696.

'Vale' — Remarks Upon an Advertisement, n.p., n.d.

'W.C.' — Mr. George Keith at Turners-Hall…Contradicting Mr. George Keith at the Tolbooth of Aberdeen, 1696.

_____ — Mr. Keith No Presbyterian, Nor Quaker; But George the Apostate, 1696.

_____ — Trepidantium Malleus Intrepidanter Malleatus, 1696.

White, George on behalf of the Turners' Hall Meeting — A Seasonable Testimony of some Christian People, 1696.

1697:

Some Seasonable Reflections upon the Quakers Solemn Protestation, 1697.

Clarke, William — One Blow More, 1697.

Elys, Edmund — Edmund Elys his Vindication of Himself, 1697.

_____ — George Keith his Saying that the Light Within is not Sufficient, 1697.

Keith, George — A Second Narrative, 1697.

_____ — An Advertisement of an Intended Meeting, n.p., 1697.

_____ — George Keith's Explications, 1697.

Leeds, Daniel — News of a Trumpet Sounding, New York, 1697, reprinted as A Trumpet Sounded, London, 1699.

[Leslie, Charles] — Satan Disrob'd, 1697.

Pain, William et al. — A Letter to Thomas Curtis, 1697.

Penington, John — The Fig-leaf Covering Discovered, 1697.

Storey, T[homas] — A Word to the Wise, n.p., [1697].

'Trepidantium Malleus' — A Reprimand for the Author, 1697.

_____ — The Foxonian Quakers, 1697.

'Vale' — A Letter on George Keith's Advertisement, 1697.

W[hitehead], G[eorge] — An Antidote against the Venom of the Snake, 1697.

Wyeth, Joseph — A Vindication of W.P., 1697.

1698:

'Calvin Philanax' — A Friendly Epistle to Mr. George Keith, 1698.

Elys, Edmund — Reflections Upon some Passages in George Keith's Third Narrative, 1698.

Keith, George — A Christian Catechism, 1698.

_____ — A Short Christian Catechisme, n.d.

———— A Third Narrative, 1698.

———— The Arguments of the Quakers…and my own, against Baptism and the Supper Examined, 1698.

Story, T[homas] A Word to the Well-Inclined, 1698.

1699:

An Answer to…a Sober Dialogue, Between a Scotch Presbyterian, 1698/9.

A Sober Dialogue Between a Country Friend, a London Friend and one of G.K.s Friends, 1699.

A Sober Dialogue Between a Scotch Presbyterian, a London Churchman, and a Real Quaker, 1699.

An Abstract by way of an Index, 1699.

Coole, Benjamin Sophistry Detected, Bristol, 1699.

Elys, Edmund A Vindication of the Doctrine Concerning the Light within, 1699.

K[eith], G[eorge] A Serious Dialogue Betwixt a Church-man and a Quaker, 1699.

Keith, George A True Relation of a Conference, 1699.

———— Some of the Many Fallacies of William Penn, 1699.

———— The Deism of William Penn, 1699.

Wyeth, Joseph To All who are Advertised by G. Keith of a Meeting, 1699.

1700:

A Dialogue Between George Keith and an Eminent Quaker, 1700.

A Letter to Mr. Robert Bridgman, 1700.

A Serious Warning and Caution unto George Keith, 1700.

Dulcedo ex Acerbis, 2nd edn., n.p., n.d.

George Keith's Complaint Against the Quakers, 1700.

In Georgium Keithum, 1700.

Mr. George Keith's Account of a National Church, 1700.

Mr. George Keith's Reasons for Renouncing Quakerism, 1700.

One Wonder More, n.p., n.d.

Phthonography, 1700.

The Christianity of the…Quakers Asserted by George Keith, n.d.

The Creed-Forgers Detected, 1700.

The Portraiture of Mr. George Keith, 1700.

The Quakers Complaint Against George Keith, 1700.

The Quakers Creed; Containing Twelve Articles, 1700.

Adams, J. — A Sermon…Occasion'd by the Recantation of Mr. Clement Joynes, 1700.

Bridgman, Robert — Some Reasons why Robert Bridgman and his Wife, 1700.

'C.J.' [Joynes, Clement?] — One of George Keith's Friends, 1700.

C[oole], B[enjamin] — A Modest Caution to the Church of England, n.p., n.d.

Coole, B[enjamin] — Honesty the Truest Policy, n.p., 1700.

Elys, Edmund — Reflections upon Some Passages in a Book, 1700.

Feild , John — The Weakness of George Keith's Reasons, 1700.

Haslewood, John — A Sermon…Occasioned by the Recantation of Dr. Joh. Spire, 1700.

Hill, Oliver — Remarks of Oliver Hill upon Mr. Keith's Farewell, n.p., n.d.

'J.A.' — Animadversions on George Keith's Account, 1700.

'J.H.' — A Letter to George Keith Concerning Salvability of the Heathen, 1700.

Joynes, Clement — Advertisement, n.p., [1700].

_____ — Montanism Revived, 1700.

Keith, George — A Narrative of the Proceedings…at Coopers-hall, 1700.

[_____] — A Serious Call to the Quakers, 1700.

_____ — A Sermon Preach'd…5th of May 1700, 2nd edn., 1700.

_____ — Advertisement, [London, 1700].

_____ — An Account of the Quakers Politicks, 1700.

_____ — Bristol Quakerism Expos'd, 1700.

_____ — George Keith's Fourth Narrative, 1700.

_____ — Mr. George Keith's Farewell Sermon, 1700.

_____ — The Quakers Proved Apostats and Heathens, 1700.

_____ — Two Sermon's Preach'd..May the 12th 1700, 1700.

Leeds, Daniel — A Challenge to Caleb Pusey, [New York], n.d.

Phillips, Daniel — Proteus Ridivivus, 1700.

'Philosensus' — A Rod for Trepidantium Malleus, 1700.

Pusey, Caleb — Satan's Harbinger Encountered, Philadelphia, 1700.

Rawlinson, W. — Robert Bridgman's Reasons…Proved Unreasonable, 1700.

Reips, N. — The Mask Taken Off, 1700.

Sandilands, Robert — Some Queries Proposed to…the Quakers at Aberdeen, Aberdeen, [1700].

Spire, John — Forasmuch as Many and Various, n.p., [1700].

'Trepidantium Malleus' — A Confirmation of a Late Epistle, 1700.

_____ — A Dialogue Between George Fox…George Keith, 1700.

_____ — A Friendly Epistle to the Reverend Clergy, 1700.

_____ — A Second Friendly Epistle to Mr. George Keith, 1700.

_____ A Snake in the Grass Caught and Crusht, 1700.

_____ A Sober Reply to a Serious Enquiry, 1700.

'W.B.' Remarks and Animadversions on Mr. Keith's Two Sermons, 1700.

1701:

The Present State of Quakerism in England, 1701.

Claridge, Richard Lux Evangelica Attestata, 1701.

_____ The Divinity, Universality and Sufficiency of the Light, 1701.

Coleman, Samuel London, 25th 12 mo. 1700, n.p., [1701].

Feild, John Light and Truth, 1701.

Joynes, Clement Philip Hermon, A Quaker Cobler, 1701.

Keith, George A Plain Discovery of Many Gross Falshoods, 1701.

_____ A Reply to Th. Upsher's Pretended Answer, n.d.

_____ Advertisement, [London, 1701].

[_____] An Account of an Occasional Conference, 1701.

_____ An Answer to 17 Queries, Oxford, 1701.

_____ George Keith's Fifth Narrative, 1701.

[Leeds, Daniel], News of a Strumpet, [New York], 1701.

Mather, William A Vindication of William Mather and his Wife, 1701.

Phillips, Daniel To All who shall be Inclined by G.K.'s Advertisement, n.p., [1701].

Smith, William Remarks Upon Mr. George Keith's Three Sermons, 1701.

Upsher, Thomas An Answer to...An Account of an Occasional Conference, 1701.

Whiting, John Judas and the Chief Priests, 1701.

_____ The Treacherous Dealer Slighted, 1701.

1702:

Keith, George — The Standard of the Quakers Examined, 1702.

Nicholls, Thomas on behalf of Oxford QM — A Turbulent Spirit, 1702.

Pusey, Caleb — Daniel Leeds Justly Rebuked, Philadelphia, 1702.

1703:

Keith, George — The Power of the Gospel, [Annapolis, 1703].

_____ — The Spirit of Railing Shimei, New York, 1703.

Keith, George, Talbot, John and Evans, Evan — Some of the Many False…Assertions of William Davis, [New York, 1703].

Leeds, Daniel — The Rebuker Rebuked, New York, 1703.

M[aule], T[homas] — For the Service of Truth against George Keith, [Philadelphia, 1703].

Pusey, Caleb — George Keith Once More Brought to the Test, Philadelphia, 1703.

P[usey], C[aleb] — Proteus Ecclesiasticus, Philadelphia, [1703].

1704:

Keith, George — Some Brief Remarks upon a Late Book, [New York, 1704].

_____ — The Great Necessity and Use of the Holy Sacraments, New York, 1704.

_____ — The Notes of the True Church, New York, 1704.

Keith, George et al. — 'An Account of the State of the Church in North America' [New York, c.1704], reprinted in Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 20 (1951), pp.363-371.

c.1705-1706:

A Few of George Keith's Testimonies, n.p., n.d.

A Further Portraiture, 1706.

	An Account How George Keith Became a Quaker, n.p., n.d.
Gwin, Thomas	A Letter to a Friend of the Danger of Apostacy, 1706.
Keith, George	A Journal of Travels, 1706.
Whiting, John	Truth the Strongest of All, [1706]. To this is attached, George Keith's Judgment Concerning Tithes.
1707:	
	A Letter from a Citizen of London, n.p., n.d.
	A Serious Examination of…Serious Call, 1707.
Elys, Edmund	Two Letters to Mr. George Keith, n.p., [1707].
Keith, George	The Magick of Quakerism, 1707.
_____	The Necessity of Faith and the Revealed Word, 1707.
Snashall, John et al.	True News out of Sussex, 1707.
1708:	
Whitehead, George	A Brief Epistle for Unity, 1708.
_____	The Power of Christ Vindicated, 1708.
1711-1712:	
Keith, George	The Magick of Quakerism Confirmed, 1711.
Whitehead, George	Light and Truth Triumphant, 1712.
1716	
	The Will of Mr. George Keith, 1716.

OTHER PAMPHLETS:

A Declaration of the Faith and Order Owned and Practised in the Congregational Churches in England, 1659.

A Short Confession of Faith…Published by some Baptised Congregations in the West, 1691.

Of Laying on of Hands, 1656.

The Axe at the Root, 1696.

The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted Against the Unjust Charge, 1689.

The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted Against the Unjust Charge, extended edition, 1698.

The Christianity of the People Commonly Called Quakers Asserted, Being a Brief Account, n.p., 1696.

The Confession of Faith of those Churches which are commonly (though falsly) Called Anabaptists, 1644.

The Humble Apology of Some Commonly Called Anabaptists, 1660.

The Lawfulness of Hearing the Publick Ministers of the Church of England, 1683.

Adis, Henry — A Fannaticks Mite, 1660.

——— — A Fannatick's Testimony Against Swearing, 1661.

Allen, Richard — An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms, 1696.

——— — A Brief Vindication of an Essay, 1696.

Barclay, Robert — An Apology, n.p., 1678.

Brabourn, Theophilus — Of the Lawfnluess [sic] of the Oath of Allegiance, n.p., 1661.

Bunyan, John — Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion, 1673.

Burrough, Edward — A Declaration to all the World of Our Faith, 1657.

C[laridge], R[ichard] — An Answer to Richard Allen's Essay, 1697.

Claxton, Laurence — A Paradisical Dialogue, 1660.

_____ — Look About You, 1659.

_____ — The Lost Sheep Found, 1660.

_____ — The Quakers Downfal, 1659.

_____ — The Right Devil Discovered, 1659.

Collier, Thomas — A Brief and True Narrative of the Unrighteous Dealings, n.p., n.d.

_____ — A Doctrinal Discourse of Self-Denial, 1691.

_____ — A Sober and Moderate Answer to Nehemiah Coxe's Invective, 1677.

_____ — The Body of Divinity, 1674.

Coxe, Nehemiah — Vindiciae Veritatis, 1677.

D[anvers], H[enry] — A Treatise of Baptism, 1673.

D'anvers, H[enry] — A Treatise of Laying on of Hands, 1674.

Den, Henry — An Epistle Recommended to all the Prisons, 1660.

Dickenson, James — A Journal of the Life…of…James Dickenson, 1745.

Ellwood, Thomas — The History of the life of Thomas Ellwood, 1714.

Farnsworth, R[ichard] — A Confession and Profession of Faith, 1658.

Farnsworth, Richard — Truth Ascended, 1663.

F[ell], M[argaret] — A Declaration…to the Present Governors, 1660.

Fox, George — A Journal…of…George Fox…First Volume, 1694.

F[ox], G[eorge] — Something in Answer to Lodowick Muggleton's Book, 1667.

Fox, George et al. — A Declaration from the Harmles and Innocent People, 1660.

Gosnold, John — A Discourse Concerning Laying on of Hands, 2nd, edn., 1701.

Grantham, Thomas — A Sigh for Peace, n.p., 1671.

_____ — The Fourth Principle of Christ's Doctrine Vindicated, 1674.

Griffith, John — Gods Oracle and Christs Doctrine, 1655.

_____ — The Searchers for Schism Search'd, n.p., 1669.

Harwood, John — The Lying Prophet Discovered, 1659.

Haworth, William — The Quaker Converted to Christianity, 1674.

Howgill, Francis — The Inheritance of Jacob Discovered, 1656.

Ives, Jeremiah — The Great Case of Conscience Opened, 1660.

'J.M.' [Marlow, Isaac] — A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing, 1690.

Keach, B[enjamin] — An Answer to Mr. Marlow's Appendix, 1691.

K[each], B[enjamin] — Darkness vanquished, 1675.

_____ — Laying on of Hands, 1698.

Keach, Benjamin — The Breach Repaired, 1691.

Keith, George — The Way Cast Up, n.p., 1677.

_____ — The Way to the City of God, n.p., 1678.

Kiffin, W[illiam] — A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion, 1681.

Kiffin, William, Steed, Robert, Barrett, George and Man, Edward — A Serious Answer to a Late Book, 1692.

K[nollys], H[anserd] — An Answer to a Brief Discourse, 1691.

Ludgater, Robert et al. — The Glory of Christ's Light Within, n.p., 1669.

Marlow, Isaac — The Controversie of Singing Brought to an End, 1696.

_____ — Truth Soberly Defended, 1692. To this is attached, Marlow, Isaac, Truth Cleared.

Morley, Benjamin — Vindication of that Righteous Principle, 1653.

Morris, Thomas — A Messenger Sent to Remove some Mistakes, 1655.

Muggleton, Lodowick — A Letter to Thomas Taylor, Quaker, n.p., 1665.

_____ — A Looking-Glass for George Fox, n.p., 1667.

_____ — The Acts of the Witnesses, 1699.

_____ — The Answer to William Penn Quaker, 1673.

_____ — The Neck of the Quakers Broken, Amsterdam, 1663.

P[enn], W[illiam] — The New Witnesses Proved Old Hereticks, n.p., 1672.

Rider, William — Layings on of Hands Asserted, 1656.

Rigge, Ambros — A Scripture-Catechism for Children, n.p., 1672.

Russel, William — Some Brief Animadversions upon Mr. Allen's Essay, 1696.

'S.W.', 'J.C.' and 'J.L.' — Truth Vindicated; or Mr. Keach's Sober Appeal, 1691. To this is attached, W[hinnel], T[homas], An Appendix, Or, a Brief Answer.

Spittlehouse, John — A Confutation of the Assertions of Mr. Samuel Oates, 1653.

Steed, Robert — An Epistle Written to the Members of a Church in London, 1691.

Tillam, Thomas — The Fourth Principle of Christian Religion, 1655.

'W.H. Christophilus' [Haworth, William] — An Antidote Against that Poysonous and Fundamental Error of the Quakers, 1676.

Whinnel, Thomas — A Sober Reply to Mr. Robert Steed's Epistle, 1691.

Whitehead, G[eorge] — The Light and Life of Christ Within, 1668.

Whitehead, G[eorge] — The Nature of Christianity, n.p., 1671.

Wright, Joseph — Folly Detected, 1691.

SECONDARY MATERIAL

FHL — 'Dictionary of Quaker Biography', MS.

BOOKS:

Ball, Bryan W. — A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 12, Leiden, 1975.

Barbour, Hugh — The Quakers in Puritan England, 1964, paperback edition, [Richmond, Indiana], 1985.

Bolam, C.G., Goring, Jeremy, short, H.L. and Thomas, Roger — The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism, 1968.

Braithwaite, William C. — The Beginnings of Quakerism, 2nd edn., 1955, reprint, York, 1981.

——— — The Second Period of Quakerism, 2nd edn., 1961, reprint, York, 1979.

Cadbury, Henry J., ed. — Annual Catalogue of George Fox's Papers Compiled in 1694-1697, Philadelphia, 1939.

Capp, Bernard S. — The Fifth-Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism, 1972.

Carroll, Kenneth L. — John Perrot: Early Quaker Schismatic, 1971.

Crosby, Thomas — The History of the English Baptists from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I, Vol.1, 1740.

Damrosch, Leo — The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1996.

Davies, Adrian — The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725, Oxford, 2000.

Davis, J.C. — Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians, Cambridge, 1986.

Frost, J. William — The Keithian Controversy in Early Pennsylvania, Norwood, PA, 1980.

Greaves, Richard L. — Deliver us From Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660-1663, Oxford, 1986.

Greaves, Richard L. and Zaller, Robert, eds. — Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century, Brighton, 1982-1984.

Hill, Christopher — The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution, 1972, reprint, 1984.

Hill, Christopher, Reay, Barry and Lamont, William — The World of the Muggletonians, 1983.

Horle, Craig W. — The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660-1688, Philadelphia, 1988.

Ingle, H. Larry — First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism, New York and Oxford, 1994.

Jones, R. Tudur — Congregationalism in England, 1662-1962, Letchworth, 1962.

Kirby, Ethyn Williams — George Keith (1638-1716), New York and London, 1942.

Lumpkin, William L. — Baptist Confessions of Faith, Chicago, 1959.

McGlothlin, W.J. — Baptist Confessions of Faith, Baptist Historical Society, 1911.

McGregor, J.F. and Reay, B. — Radical Religion in the English Revolution, Oxford, 1984, reprint, 1988.

Moore, Rosemary — The Light in their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain, 1646-1666, University Park, PA, 2000.

Morgan, Nicholas — Lancashire Quakers and the Establishment, 1660-1730, Halifax, 1993.

Nash, Gary B. — Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726, Princeton, NJ, 1968.

Nuttall, Geoffrey F. — The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, Oxford, 1946.

Reay, Barry — The Quakers and the English Revolution, 1985.

Scott, David — Quakerism in York, 1650-1720, University of York, Borthwick Paper No.80, 1991.

Smith, Joseph — A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books, 1867.

Stephen, Leslie and Lee, Sidney, eds. — The Dictionary of National Biography, 1917, reprint, Oxford, 1967-1968.

Taylor, Adam — The History of the English General Baptists in Two Parts. Part First: The English General Baptists of the Seventeenth Century, 1818.

Taylor, Ernest E. — The Valiant Sixty, 1947.

Trevett, Christine — Women and Quakerism in the 17th Century, York, 1991.

Underwood, A.C. — A History of the English Baptists, 1947.

Vann, Richard T. — The Social Development of English Quakerism, Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

Vipont, Elfrida — George Fox and the Valiant Sixty, 1975.

Watts, Michael — The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution, 1978, reprint, Oxford, 1999.

Wilson, Bryan — Religious Sects: A Sociological Study, 1970.

ARTICLES:

Adams, Beverly — 'The "Durty Spirit" at Hertford: A Falling out of Friends', JEH, 52 (2001).

Beddard, R.A. — 'The Restoration Church' in J.R. Jones, ed., The Restored Monarchy, 1660-1688, 1979.

Bourke, Rosamund — 'Quaker Beliefs: Diverse yet Distinctive', Quaker Studies, 7 (2002-2003).

Butler, Jon — '"Gospel Order Improved": The Keithian Schism and the Exercise of Quaker Ministerial Authority in Pennsylvania', William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 31 (1974).

[Cadbury, Henry] — 'The End of a Schismatic', Friends Intelligencer, 112 (1955).

Capp, Bernard — in 'Debate, Fear, Myth and Furore: Reappraising the "Ranters"', Past and Present, 140 (1993).

Carroll, Kenneth L. — 'Early Quakers and "Going Naked as a Sign"', Quaker History, 67 (1978).

Clark, Richard — '"The Gangreen of Quakerism": An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution', JRH, 11 (1981).

Cody, Edward — 'The Price of Perfection: The Irony of George Keith', Pennsylvania History, 39 (1972).

Dandelion, Pink — 'Schism as Collective Disaffiliation: A Quaker Typology', Quaker Studies, 8 (2003-2004).

Greaves, Richard L. — 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"? Changing Conceptions of Quakers in Early Modern Britain', Albion, 33 (2001).

Greene, Douglas G. — 'Muggletonians and Quakers: A Study in the Interaction of Seventeenth-Century Dissent', Albion, 15 (1983).

Howson, Barry — 'Eschatology in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England', Evangelical Quarterly, 70 (1998).

Isichei, Elizabeth — 'From Sect to Denomination among English Quakers' in Bryan R. Wilson, ed., Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements, 1967.

Johns, David L. — 'Convincement and Disillusionment: Printer William Bradford and the Keithian Controversy in Colonial Philadelphia', JFHS, 57 (1994-1996).

Kendall, Joan — 'The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress', Costume, 19 (1985).

Langley, Arthur S. — 'Seventeenth-Century Baptist Disputations', TBHS, 6 (1918-1919).

Laurence, Anne — 'A Priesthood of She-Believers: Women and Congregations in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England', in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., Women in the Church, Studies in Church History, 27, Oxford, 1990.

McGregor, J.F. — in 'Debate, Fear, Myth and Furore: Reappraising the "Ranters"', Past and Present, 140 (1993).

Martin, Clare J.L. — 'Tradition Versus Innovation: The Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies', Quaker Studies, 8 (2003-2004).

Mullett, Michael — 'From Sect to Denomination? Social Developments in Eighteenth-Century Quakerism', JRH, 13 (1984).

Nicholson, Marjorie — 'George Keith and the Cambridge Platonists', Philosophical Review, 39 (1930).

Nuttall, Geoffrey — 'Assembly and Association in Dissent, 1689-1831', first published in G.J. Cuming and D. Baker eds., Councils and Assemblies, Studies in Church History, 7, Cambridge, 1971, reprinted in Geoffrey Nuttall, Studies in English Dissent, Weston Rhyn, 2002.

O'Malley, Thomas — '"Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit": A Review of Quaker Control over their Publications, 1672-1689', JEH, 33 (1982).

Payne, Ernest A. — 'Baptists and the Laying on of Hands', BQ, New Series, 15 (1953-1954).

Penney, Norman — 'Quakerism in Wiltshire', Wiltshire Notes and Queries, 3 (1899-1901).

Ramsbottom, John D. 'Presbyterians and "Partial Conformity" in the Restoration Church of England', JEH, 43 (1992).

Randles, Ralph '"Faithful Friends and Well Qualified": The Early Years of the Friends' School at Lancaster', in Michael Mullett, ed., Early Lancaster Friends, University of Lancaster, Occasional Paper No.5, 1978.

Reay, Barry 'The Authorities and Early Restoration Quakerism', JEH, 34 (1983).

Richey, Russell E. 'Effects of Toleration of Eighteenth-Century Dissent', JRH, 8 (1975).

Smith, Howard 'The Wilkinson-Story Controversy in Reading', JFHS, 1 (1903-1904).

Smith, Nigel 'Exporting Enthusiasm: John Perrot and the Quaker Epic' in Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, eds., Literature in the English Civil War, Cambridge, 1990.

Snell, Beatrice Saxon 'The Devotional Life of Early Friends', JFHS, 44 (1952).

Trowell, Stephen 'George Keith: Post-Restoration Quaker Theology and the Experience of Defeat', BJR, 76 (1994).

Wilson, Bryan R. 'An Analysis of Sect Development' in Bryan R. Wilson, ed., Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements, 1967.

Wykes, David L. 'Friends, Parliament and the Toleration Act', JEH, 45 (1994).

_____ 'Quaker Schoolmasters, Toleration and the Law, 1689-1714', JRH, 21 (1997).

_____ '"The Settling of Meetings and the Preaching of the Gospel": The Development of the Dissenting Interest, 1690-1715', JURCHS, 5 (1992-1997).

THESES:

Adams, Beverly — 'The Body in the Water: Religious Conflict in Hertford, 1660-c.1702', Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 2000.

Allen, Richard C. — 'The Society of Friends in Wales: The Case of Monmouthshire, c.1654-1836' Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999.

Clifford, Ruth M. — 'The General Baptists, 1640-1660', M.Litt. Thesis, Oxford University, 1991.

Dobbs, Jack P.B. — 'Authority and the Early Quakers', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1995.

Land, Richard D. — 'Doctrinal Controversies of English Particular Baptists (1644-1691), as Illustrated by the Career and Writings of Thomas Collier', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1979.

Leachman, Caroline — 'From an "Unruly Sect" to a Society of "Strict Unity": The Development of Quakerism in England, c.1650-1689', Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1997.

MacDonald, Murdina D. — 'London Calvinistic Baptists, 1689-1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration', D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1982.

Underwood, Ted LeRoy — 'The Controversy Between the Baptists and the Quakers in England, 1650-1689: A Theological Elucidation', Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1965.

Vaughn, James Barry — 'Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)', Ph.D. Thesis, St. Andrew's University, 1989.